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CATHOLIC THEOLOGY

OR

THE CATECHISM EXPLAINED

BY

REV. D. I. LANSLOTS, O.S.B.

BX
1968
L3
1911

WITH A PREFACE BY

THE RIGHT REV. F. A. GASQUET, O.S.B.

ABBOT-PRESIDENT

SECOND EDITION

6192.

ST. LOUIS, MO., 1913

PUBLISHED BY B. HERDER

17 SOUTH BROADWAY

FREIBURG (BADEN)
GERMANY

LONDON, W. C.
68, GREAT RUSSELL STREET

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Romæ die 4, Decembris 1910.

D. Maurus M. Serafini, O. S. B.
Abbas Gen. Congr. Cassinansis a Pr. Obs.

D. Leo Allodi, O. S. B.
Abb. Canc. us.

NIHIL OBSTAT.

Sti. Ludovici, die 29. Oct. 1910.

F. G. Holweck,
Censor Librorum.

IMPRIMATUR.

Sti. Ludovici, die 30. Oct. 1910.

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Becktold
Printing and Book Mfg. Co.,
St. Louis, Mo., U. S. A.

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PREFACE

At no time probably in the Church's history has there been greater need for sound and definite teaching on the fundamental truths of Christian faith and practice than at the present day. The obvious tendency of modern states is to what is called "undenominational" religion, which, except in name, can hardly be distinguished from irreligion or secularism. The main desire of those who advocate this is to get rid of religious instruction as a necessary part of the training of children. These so-called educationalists claim that dogma, and morality that is founded upon a belief in God and in His eternal law, are fetters which bind the impressionable minds of the young unnecessarily and which inevitably tend to narrow the characters of those whose receptive powers have been submitted to such training. Hence they desire either to banish religious education altogether from the schools, or under color of the popular cry, that "the nation has nothing to do with dogma" to substitute vague and colorless formularies for definite truths, and ethical teaching for a morality based on Christian doctrine.

To such mischievous pretensions the Church persistently and of necessity opposes the whole weight of her authority. In the long course of the centuries of her existence she has ever insisted upon the absolute need of sound teaching in faith and practice. Again and again she has asserted that her divine mission to preach the gospel to all nations is fulfilled more truly and efficaciously by means of the simple but definite religious instruction of the young and unlettered than by all the eloquent skill of the greatest of her orators.

In England, for instance, during the Middle Ages, the need for constant and plain instruction in the fundamental truths of the faith was recognized and insisted upon. The Synods of the English Church and the Constitutions of individual Archbishops and Bishops established the law

upon this matter and even directed the methods to be followed by the clergy in fulfilment of this plain duty. Archbishop Peccham, for example, ordered every priest in the Province of Canterbury to declare and explain to the people during the Mass on Sundays, the Articles of the Creed, the commandments of God and of His church and the plain duty of every Christian man. To enable priests to do this to the best advantage and to have at hand "a sound form of words" numerous manuals of popular instruction were drawn up by skilled theologians and multiplied by writers of the age. With the invention of printing too, in the fifteenth century, this special need was met in a remarkable manner. It is at least worthy of note that a large proportion of the books which issued from the first presses of Europe were, in one way or another, manuals of this sort.

This subject of religious instruction naturally recalls the fact that our Holy Father, Pius X, in his Encyclical "Acerbo nimis" published on April 15, 1905, insists in the strongest manner upon the absolute present need of simple or catechetical instruction. He declares that it is difficult, except for those who have had experience, to believe what crass ignorance of even the essential truths of religion exists in the world at the present time. Great masses of people in the cities of to-day grow up without knowledge of their Creator, of the Redemption by the Incarnate Word, of the august Sacrifice of the Holy Mass or of the Sacraments, by which grace is given to the soul. It is by no means a rare experience for a priest to be called to the bedside of a dying man and to find himself obliged, in the very last moments of a life, to try to impart even a general knowledge of the great mysteries of religion. The evil is far-reaching and is gradually but steadily sapping the morality of the peoples of to-day. As the Pope points out, much of what all states have to deplore to-day is the fruit of ignorance. Though indeed a low standard of morality can exist with mere secular knowledge, still when the mind is ignorant of religious principles, uprightness of character and good morals very seldom are found to exist.

For this reason our Holy Father strongly insists upon the duty of giving simple, but carefully prepared instructions on the Christian faith and practice. The present

book, an explanation of the catechism of Baltimore, has been drawn up to help priests and others to give these necessary instructions. Its purpose specially is to show that what God's law requires of us is no hard and impossible task but "a reasonable service."

F. A. GASQUET, O.S.B., Abbot-President.

Rome, Easter Sunday, 1909.

Catholic Theology

LESSON FIRST

ON THE END OF MAN

1. *Q. Who made the world?*
A. God made the world.

The first question of the catechism concerns the origin of the world, of all things visible. The world is not and cannot be self-existent, for it is composed of parts, which are always changing and are governed by certain permanent laws. Hence the world is not independent, for it depends on the being that puts its parts together and on the laws by which it is governed. Were it self-existent, it would exist necessarily and be independent of all outside influence, and would not be subject to change. Consequently, the world is contingent, that is, it depends for its origin and existence on a contingency. Wherefore it is a dependent being, an effect of a prior being, or cause, which gave it being and existence, and subjected it to permanent laws.

Wherefore there was a time when the world did not exist, and there was a time when it began to exist, that is, when its cause produced it and gave it existence. How was this done? Did the being that made the world use some pre-existing materials and put them together, as men build a house? Or did he make the world in some other way? Materialists tell us that matter pre-existed from all eternity, and developed itself according to some intrinsic laws into the world as we have it. But they forget to tell us, whence came that eternal matter and the laws by which matter, itself inert, developed itself. Other materialists tell us the world was formed by an infinite

number of atoms coming together by chance and forming the world. But they also forget to explain the origin of those atoms, and how such a wonderful effect, as the world, could be the outcome of chance, especially since we all know that the effect can never be greater than its cause. The pantheist tells us that the world is an emanation of God, or a development and a perfectioning of God. But God is not a compound being, nor can there be question of God developing Himself, and neither is He subject to increase or decrease, nor can He grow better. Moreover, pantheism by making the world either a part of God or God Himself, makes of God a material monster. This is the height of absurdity.

God made the world, but not of pre-existing materials nor out of a part of Himself, as we have seen. God is all-powerful, and therefore needs no pre-existing materials, as we do, when He wishes to make something; all He needs is to will that the things He wishes to make, should be, should come into existence, and lo! where there was nothing before He willed it, there is now every thing whose existence He willed. This is called creating, or making something exist without using any pre-existing materials for making it, but simply willing it to be. This God alone can do, because He alone is almighty. It was thus that He made the world.

2. *Q. Who is God?*

A. God is the Creator of heaven and earth and of all things.

The Catechism here teaches not what God is in Himself, but what He is in regard to us, and to all that is outside of Himself. It is altogether impossible for us in this life to understand perfectly what God is; the angels in heaven have no adequate idea of God, because He is infinite. We know, however, that He is the Creator of heaven and earth and of all things; creation gives us an idea, however incomplete, of God and His infinite perfections. By heaven and earth, we understand all that they are and all that they contain, angels, men, animals, plants, etc. All things outside of God. God is the Creator, that is, He made heaven and earth out of nothing, by an act of His all powerful will. He did not make

heaven and earth from pre-existing matter, nor from His own nature, but out of nothing. God existed before heaven and earth were created; He is self-existent. Being the first Cause, there never was anything or any being prior to Him.

How long is it since God made heaven and earth and all things? According to the most generally received opinion, the world in its present state has already existed six thousand years; we have, however, no absolute certainty about it, because the chronology of Holy Scripture is in many places very obscure.

In how much time did God create this world? Scripture teaches us that God created heaven and earth in six days; all however do not agree as to what is meant by days. Some theologians claim that these six days mean six natural days, each composed of 24 hours; while others maintain, with apparently sufficient reason, that by these six days are meant six more or less long periods of time, which God represented by the word days, when He revealed to Moses or the other Patriarchs the work of creation. Why did He create the world? Not to increase His happiness, because, being infinite, He enjoys in Himself infinite happiness. But being infinitely good, He wishes to communicate His happiness to other beings and show forth His own perfections. "The heavens show forth the glory of God." (Ps. 18, 2.)

3. *Q. What is man?*

A. Man is a creature composed of body and soul and made to the image and likeness of God.

The Catechism here proposes three fundamental truths of all religious instruction. How would it be possible for us to serve God, if we do not know: 1, who we are, whether we are created by God, whether we are independent of Him and have an immortal soul; 2, for what purpose we are in the world; whether we ought to seek out our happiness here below in earthly goods and pleasures; 3, what in general we should do to attain our end. In the answer to the question what man is, the Catechism teaches us: 1, the origin of man; 2, the difference between man and the other creatures; 3, how man is constituted; 4, how long he is to exist, and 5, that he is created by God. A man

exists not of himself, nor does he proceed from an angel or any other creature, but he is created, that is, made out of nothing, by the omnipotence of God.

How does man differ from the other creatures? Man is a rational creature, that is, a creature endowed with reason and understanding, whereby he can know the nature of things, judge for himself and act with a free will. By these faculties man differs from all the other creatures of the world, and surpasses them all. In the universe there are inanimate creatures, which have merely a material existence, such as, the earth, the stars, metals, stones, etc; there are others that exist and grow, that is, have a vegetative life, such as plants; others have not only existence and a vegetative, but also a sensitive life, and are called animals; but man, besides all these, has a rational life; that is, is endowed with understanding, or reason and a free will.

How is man constituted? Man is a composite of an immortal soul and a mortal body. His body is material and visible; his soul is spiritual and invisible. The soul is known by her actions, that is, by her intellectual knowledge, and her free will. This shows that the soul is superior to the body. Man's body is mortal, compounded of parts, and therefore subject to death; the soul is immortal, because it is spiritual and not composed of parts; it will never die. God alone who created the soul, has power over the soul, and as He made it a spiritual being, He alone could annihilate it; but as He endowed it with an immortal nature, He will never do so.

For how long will man exist? Man will exist forever, because his soul is immortal. Although the body is subject to death, yet at the end of the world it will rise again and be reunited with the soul forever. Man was made after the image and likeness of God. In the following two questions this great prerogative of man will be explained.

4. *Q. Is this likeness in the body or in the soul?*
A. This likeness is chiefly in the soul.

Before examining how man can be like to God, we must first inquire what this likeness of God means, and we will then understand that it exists chiefly in the soul. Man cannot bear the image of God according to his body, as if God were a corporal being; this would be rank heresy.

Image here stands for model. This model, however, is not the Divine Word, that is, the Son, who is the image of the Father, but it is the divine essence, the Tri-une God. After this image was man created. Image and likeness here denote the same thing. This image of God in man is not a perfect likeness of God, but only a similarity to Him. Man is then similar to God by his nature, and will never lose this likeness or similarity. This image of God in man was deformed by sin, but not totally lost. Besides this natural image, there is also a supernatural image of God in man, which consists in sanctifying grace, whereby man becomes, to a certain extent, a partaker of the divine nature. This supernatural image may be totally destroyed by sin, and be again restored by grace and justification. Both this natural and supernatural image of God was impressed upon the soul of Adam at the moment of his creation. He lost the latter by his disobedience, but regained it by his hearty sorrow and a penance of over 900 years. The Catechism asserts that this image is chiefly in the soul, indicating that there must be a certain reflection of that image even in the body of man. The body of man is the image of the soul; the erect attitude of man, his head raised on high, show that soul as ruler of the body, has a divine origin and is capable of living forever.

5. *Q. How is the soul like to God?*

A. The soul is like to God because it is a spirit that will never die and has understanding and free will.

The Catechism here treats of the natural image of God in man; this natural likeness must then be found in the good and in the wicked. The soul is a spirit; revelation and sound reason prove it. Experience shows us that we think of things, which are not the objects of the senses; we have ideas of possibility and impossibility, necessity and accident, cause and effect, virtue and vice, etc.; we know things more perfectly when they can be known by the senses, because from the individuals we perceive our mind forms general ideas, which enable us to compare, reason about, and combine together; our mind perceives that we cannot in certain cases be guided by the senses, and often causes us to judge differently from the testimony of the senses; and we know that our will is free, and acts as it pleases, often disregarding the requirements

of our body. All these properties show that there is in us something that surpasses the capacity and power of our body; and that, therefore, our soul, from which they proceed, is not only superior to our body, but can and does act independently of our body, and consequently, can also exist without our body.

Reason proves just as clearly and as easily that the soul of man must be immortal. First, the soul is immaterial and not a composite like the body; therefore it is not mortal like the body; it cannot cease to exist, except God, who made it, should annihilate it. God, however, does not contradict Himself in His works; consequently He will not destroy a being, which He has made immortal. Secondly, if man's soul is not immortal, there is not sufficient sanction to God's law, that is, there is no sufficient punishment for the wicked, no sufficient reward for the good. On earth God does not indeed punish evil as it deserves, nor reward good as it merits. Yet God is infinitely just and holy, and cannot leave sin without sufficient punishment, nor good without sufficient reward; it follows, then, naturally that after this life there must be another life, and hence that the soul does not die with the body. Punishment and reward in the other world would not be sufficient, if they were not eternal. The possession of a good that will once be lost, does not satisfy the heart of man; a punishment that is not endless, would not suffice to restrain man from committing crime; and would bear no proportion to mortal sin. Thirdly, the eternal yearning of the soul after never-ending happiness, the unanimous conviction of all nations of the soul's immortality, corroborate the other arguments.

The soul, moreover, is like God, because it has understanding, knows, by reasoning, its objects by their causes; and because it has a free will; a will that can determine itself to good or evil, to act or not to act, a will that cannot be determined or compelled by any violence, however great. No created being can deprive man of the liberty of his will; if well used it will make the image of God always brighter in the soul; whereas its abuse will disfigure it, and will make the soul an object of hatred to the Almighty. We should, then, constantly strive to make a good use of our free will.

6. *Q. Why did God make you?*
A. God made me to know Him, to love Him, to serve Him in this world, and to be happy with Him forever in the next.

God created man to manifest His outward glory and share, with the work of His hands, His infinite happiness. The end which man is to aim at, is the attainment of that happiness. The Catechism here answers what the end of man is, and what means must lead him to that end. Three things are necessary to attain this end. To know God, to love Him, to serve Him in this world.

To know God, that is, to have a true knowledge of God, viz., to know what God is, how we depend on Him, what He requires from us and what we owe Him. It is not sufficient that we know Him only by reason, we must also know Him by faith. Because God has raised us to the supernatural order and revealed to us, through Christ, hidden things, which surpass all human understanding, concerning Himself, our destiny and His service, we must, by faith, accept that divine revelation and know Him. To serve God, we must first know Him, for it is absolutely impossible to serve a master without knowing him and his orders sufficiently. To love God is to keep His commandments; to love God is to wish Him well, to do for Him all that He reasonably desires for Himself. What God desires of us is that we keep His commandments; therefore to love God is to keep His commandments. Without loving God it is impossible to attain our last end; because He cannot reward us with the beatific vision in the other world, except we deserve it by serving Him; and we cannot serve Him unless we love Him in this world by keeping His commandments. To serve Him in this world, to the end of our life, is to keep His commandments, not for a time only, but as long as we live, as long as we are in this world. This is just as necessary as the two other conditions to attain our last end, because, if after some time we were to fail to serve Him, we would recede or turn away from our end. He who dies in the state of sin, and thereby fails to serve God unto the end, can have no claim to share God's happiness in the other world, because he has not fulfilled the requisite conditions. By knowing

Him, loving Him and serving Him in this world, we will attain the final purpose of our existence, eternal happiness, the beatific vision. The perfect happiness of man will consist in seeing God as He is, face to face. On earth we do not know God, nor see Him, as He is; we know Him only in an imperfect manner, by His works; God is infinitely more perfect than His works.

In the next world the beatific vision will be the reward of the good; for it will confer on them supreme happiness. All happiness here below is but a shadow of what God has prepared for those that serve Him faithfully to the end of their lives. Man is obliged to do all in his power to avoid whatever would frustrate the end for which God created him.

7. Q. Of which must we take more care, our soul or our body?

A. We must take more care of our soul than of our body.

We naturally take more care of things the more valuable they are. Nothing on earth can be compared to the value of the soul; it is worth more than the world; and infinitely more than the body which it animates. It bears the image and likeness of its Creator. To the end of the world God reserves to Himself the direct creation of every soul.

The first book of Holy Scripture shows clearly how God considered the creation of man as of greater importance than that of the rest of the visible world. For the creation of all other things He simply said: "Let it be," and it was; but when creating man, the masterpiece of His omnipotence on earth, He said: "Let us make man to our image and likeness." The body of man was taken from the earth, as from pre-existing matter; but his soul was immediately created by God to His own image. God Himself values the soul more highly than all the rest of creation. For what brought Him down from heaven to take upon Himself our human nature, and shed His blood; if not the soul of man, upon which He had cast His merciful eyes? According to the teaching of our Lord, the whole world with all its contents does not counterbalance the loss or injury of the soul. God's enemy and ours, the devil, realizes that the whole world is nothing com-

pared to the soul. The body is but matter, and of its nature tends to dissolution. It will return again to the dust from which it was taken. Since then the soul is of so great value and the body of comparatively such little consequence, it is reasonable that we should take far more care of our soul than of our body. The body must be made, then, to serve the best interests of the soul.

8. *Q. Why must we take more care of our soul than of our body?*

A. We must take more care of our soul than of our body, because in losing our soul we lose God and everlasting happiness.

Had Adam not transgressed the command of God, man's body would have naturally followed the dictates of his soul, but since the sin of Adam, there is, in spiritual matters, a continual war between the two; the body is now no longer the faithful subject of the soul, but ranks amongst its worse enemies, on account of its passions. It must now be kept in subjection, in order to preserve the sovereignty of the soul. If we take all care of our body, and neglect our soul, we act contrary to sound reason, for we thereby frustrate the end of our creation. To attain our end, we must love God and serve Him; but the love and service of God require us to keep His commandments; and this we cannot do unless we wage a continual warfare against our passions, against the lusts of our body; for our Lord requires His disciples to deny themselves, to do violence to themselves in order to reach heaven. Hence, as our body is often the enemy of our salvation by alluring us to enjoy forbidden goods, forbidden earthly pleasures, we must keep it in subjection, and therefore, bestow more care on our soul than on our body; and this especially since the soul is far more valuable than the body. The Catechism here gives us another reason for this, viz.: because by reversing the order, we would lose our soul, and by losing our soul, we would lose God and everlasting happiness. When the order prescribed by reason is reversed, the result is inevitable; the loss of the soul must ensue. If we yield to the passions of our body, we transgress the law of God and cause the spiritual death of our soul. Man was raised by God to the supernatural

order; the life of the soul is sanctifying grace, which is lost by yielding to the passions of our body. Sanctifying grace being lost, the soul becomes an object of hatred to God, and will be deprived of the beatific vision, the reward of those who conquer the enemies of their salvation, the body included. God is everywhere. His justice will be eternally felt in the abyss of hell; but the damned do not see Him as He is; He is to them like a lost treasure, which they have not the faintest hope of ever finding. They lost their God by caring more for their body than for their soul; and along with the loss of God, they lost everlasting happiness, because seeing God as He is, can alone constitute the perfect eternal happiness of man. Since then our real and eternal happiness depends on the care or salvation of our soul, and since our soul will infallibly be lost if we care more for our body; reason, and above all, charity to ourselves demand that we take more care of our soul than of our body. It is, however, also our duty to take reasonable care of our body, of its wants and its health; but in such a manner, that it will promote, rather than hinder, the salvation of our soul.

9. *Q. What must we do to save our souls?*

A. To save our souls we must worship God by faith, hope and charity; that is, we must believe in Him, hope in Him, and love Him with all our heart.

To attain our last end and everlasting happiness, we must worship God, and worship Him as He wishes. This worship, or adoration, consists in recognizing God's supreme dominion over all things, in acknowledging our entire dependence on Him, and in revering His supreme majesty. He alone is self-existent, the Omnipotent, before whom all creation is but weakness, who by His will gave being to all that is, preserves them, and keeps them from returning to nothing. He is infinite loveliness, infinite greatness, infinite perfection, before whom the rest of creation is as a mere nothing. This reason itself tells us. All mankind admits it, except those whose wickedness induces them to say, in their hearts, "There is no God." Our body and soul, our whole being depends on God; without Him we should not be; without His omnipotence sustaining us, we should return to the nothingness from which we are taken. We must acknowledge

our entire dependence on Him. We must, besides, revere His infinite majesty; our body and soul must render to God, each its proper worship; interior and exterior worship. As there might be in this worship either excess or defect, God Himself has prescribed how we should worship Him, that is, by faith, hope and charity. These are called the three theological virtues, to which all moral virtues are subordinate and may be referred. St. Thomas beautifully explains the necessity of these virtues as follows: "Man is called by God to supernatural happiness, towards which he must be disposed and must tend by proportionate acts of the understanding and will; but these two faculties are only natural and fall short of the order of supernatural happiness according to the saying of St. Paul: 'Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man, what things God has prepared for them that love Him.' Hence something of the supernatural order must be conferred on man, in order to make him capable of working for a supernatural end. In so far as the intellect is concerned, certain supernatural principles are imparted to man; these are worthy of belief and constitute the objects of faith. Secondly, the will must be disposed to that end, as to something that it is possible to attain; this is the object of hope. Therefore, it is necessary that there should be a spiritual union between the will and the end which it must attain, that the will should be to some extent transformed into it, and this is effected by charity." Without believing in God, hoping in Him and loving Him, we can not worship Him as He wishes, and hence can not save our soul.

10. *Q. How shall we know the things which we are to believe?*

A. We shall know the things which we are to believe from the Catholic Church, through which God speaks to us.

As man is to worship God by believing in Him and thus save his soul, it must be possible for him to know the things which he is to believe, and this on an infallible authority, that is, an authority which cannot deceive him either by ignorance or untruth. Nothing short of an infallible authority can rightfully prescribe to our reason, the things which it is to believe. We know that such an au-

thority is God Himself, to whom reason owes blind submission. We are bound to believe the doctrines taught by our divine Saviour during His ministry, because they are infallibly true, for Jesus Christ, being God, is infallible. But Christ did not forever remain on earth to teach mankind the truths, which they are to believe, and yet to the end of time men were to be saved by the same means. To believe the truths He taught was ever to remain the first condition of salvation; it does not seem consistent with the design of the most wise God concerning man, whom He had endowed with reason, to give him a teacher who would be liable to teach him error or lead him into it. Hence He would give him one that should infallibly teach him the truth. Who is that teacher? It is the Catholic Church, through which God speaks to us. Christ left to His Apostles the whole deposit of Faith; He promised to send them the Holy Ghost, who would teach them all truth. They were commissioned to hand down the faith He had taught them to their successors to the end of time. Christians of all times and places were to believe the very same truths, because faith is necessarily one, as St. Paul declares. To the keeping of the Catholic Church, therefore, is entrusted the deposit of Faith, there is no other authority on earth in religious matters, to which human reason owes undoubted submission. The written Word of God does not give us the whole Revelation of God to man; it was never meant to be the guide of reason, except through the authority of the Church. The Gospel had been already preached far and wide before all the New Testament was written for the benefit of those who believed in truths revealed by Christ, and already knew the faith; hence the New Testament appeared only after the Church had been founded and widely propagated, and therefore could not have been intended by God as the rule of faith, for the Church was already the rule of faith before the writing of the New Testament. To the Church alone, by a special favor of the Almighty, qualities were vouchsafed, which make her an infallible authority in matters of Faith. When Christ commissioned His Apostles to continue His work upon earth, to spread the faith through the whole world, He promised to be with them "all days even to the consummation of ages." He guaranteed thereby to His Church indefectibility and infallibility. If the Church were to err,

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she would cease to be the true Church; but Christ promised that she should never be overcome by error, by the gates of hell. Through her God speaks to us; from her we learn all things necessary for true belief in God and His revelation.

11. *Q. Where shall we find the chief truths which the Church teaches?*

A. We shall find the chief truths which the Church teaches in the Apostles' Creed.

In the Apostles' Creed we have the chief truths which the Church teaches, but not all the truths which we must believe. Whatever the Church teaches, we must firmly believe; it matters not whether they are contained in the Apostles' Creed or not, because we admit them on the same infallible authority. This Creed is also called Symbol of the Apostles, which means an abridgement of what we are to believe. It was composed by the Apostles, with the assistance of the Holy Ghost, though in this they were not inspired by Him in the same way as He inspired them and others in writing the different books of the Old and New Testaments. That it was composed by the Apostles before their dispersion, appears from the fact that the Fathers of the early ages of the Church already speak of it as in use in the Church. The end which the Apostles had in view, when composing the Creed, was to give the faithful an easy and uniform means of knowing the essential truths of the Christian religion, and of imprinting them in their memory and of knowing and distinguishing each other from infidels and heretics. We are obliged to know the whole Creed, and it would be sinful if our ignorance of it were wilful. There are, besides, certain articles contained in the Creed which we *must absolutely know,* in order to be saved. We must know that there is but one God, who will punish the wicked and reward the good. It is also necessary to know that there are three divine Persons, God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost; and that God the Son became man to save us. We must at least know and believe these four articles, otherwise we cannot serve God in a supernatural manner and obtain a supernatural reward; our works cannot be supernatural, unless performed through supernatural faith, for

they otherwise would be only natural works, incapable of gaining supernatural merit.

12. *Q. Say the Apostles' Creed?*

A. I believe in God, the Father Almighty, Creator of Heaven and earth; and in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord; who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified; died, and was buried. He descended into hell: the third day He arose again from the dead: He ascended into heaven, sitteth at the right hand of God, the Father Almighty: from thence He shall come to judge the living and the dead. I believe in the Holy Ghost, the Holy Catholic Church, the communion of Saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

The Apostles' Creed is divided into twelve articles, presenting different truths each one of which is to be distinctly believed. According to some authors each of the twelve Apostles composed one of these articles.

St. Peter: "I believe in God the Father Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth." Why does the Creed say, "I believe in God" and not I believe God? Faith is a motion or elevation of the soul to God; faith united to charity, as it must be in order to avail us for life eternal, tends of its nature to God.

We can know God in two ways. A man, for instance, considering the component parts of the universe, the earth, with an infinite variety of plants, the firmament with its innumerable stars, is forced to confess at the consideration of all these wonders arranged with so much order and perfection, that some one created all this. This is called knowing God by reason. But to believe in God, as being three divine Persons in one God, it is necessary that He should reveal it to us, and that we accept His word by faith. When God proposes to us a truth through the instrumentality of His Church, we immediately give up our own judgment, and accept as truth what He deigns to reveal. In this manner we believe in God. We then also naturally believe in the Omnipotence of God: the creation of heaven and earth being sufficient proof of it.

St. John: "And in Jesus Christ His only Son our Lord." Why is Jesus Christ called Lord, a title which in the creed is not given to the Father? Because we belong to Christ in a particular way; by Him God created us and by His Blood He redeemed us and freed us from the slavery of Satan.

St. James the Greater: "Who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary." The Three Divine Persons coöperate in the work of man's redemption. The Father sends His Son, the Son comes down from Heaven and the Holy Ghost works this sublime wonder. Mary gave the Son the substance of His human nature. As there is in Christ but one Person, this makes the Virgin Mary truly the Mother of God, since she is the Mother of a Person who is God.

St. Andrew: "Suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died and was buried." The Apostles did not content themselves with saying that He died for us, because it was important that all should ever have present to their mind the victory of the Cross over Satan. The remedy for our sins has to be provided from the source whence the devil had taken his deadly poison. The name of the Roman Governor is given, under whose administration Jesus suffered. From this we know the date when the great wonder of God's love for man was accomplished. He was buried, so that His prophecy of His glorious resurrection might be clearly proved.

St. Philip: "*He descended into hell;*" not indeed into the place, where there is no redemption, but into the place where the souls of the just who had died before His coming were detained.

St. Thomas: "The third day He arose again from the dead." Christ died on Friday and arose on Sunday before daylight; the third day after He died, according to the computation of the Jews. He arose by His own power, as He had prophesied, showing thereby that He is not only man, but God also.

St. Bartholomew: "He ascended into heaven and sitteth at the right hand of God, the Father Almighty." When the Son of God came down from heaven to assume our human nature, He did not for that reason leave heaven. When therefore we say He ascended into heaven, this must

be understood of His sacred humanity. Christ as man occupies the highest place in heaven, because His human nature is united to His divine nature in one person.

St. Matthew: "From thence He shall come to judge the living and the dead." He will come to judge not only those men who will live on earth immediately before the general destruction, but also all that ever lived since the beginning of the world, because all without exception shall be judged.

St. James the Less: "I believe in the Holy Ghost." The Holy Ghost is the third Person of the Blessed Trinity, equal to the Father and to the Son in all things, and only distinct from them in Person; like them, He must be adored and glorified. As the soul gives life to the body, so does the Holy Ghost give supernatural life to the soul. He is the life of the Church; He protects and vivifies her, and enables all her members, however different in race, language and customs, to live by the same mystical body, of which Christ is the Head.

St. Simon: "The Catholic Church, the communion of saints." After having proposed to us the principal points which we are to believe regarding the blessed Trinity, the Creed adds a few more articles to strengthen our faith in what precedes. The first of these concerns the Church, to which Christ promised His indefectible protection, and which is to be the infallible exponent of His doctrine. Believing in the Church is believing all that which she proposes to us as divine Revelation. The Apostles contented themselves with giving only one of the distinctive marks of the true Church, calling her the *Catholic* Church. Upon them was the Church built, they were her first members, and were commissioned to spread the Church over the whole world, and thus to make her Catholic or universal. As no other will ever be the church of all times and all places, it is just as easy now, or even more so than it was to the first Christians, to know her and believe in her.

The communion of saints is one of the most consoling articles of the Christian faith. The members of the Church, whether militant on earth, suffering in Purgatory or triumphant in heaven, form but one mystical body; charity, which unites them, constitutes among them a mutual communication of good. This is called the communion of Saints. The saints help us by their intercession; we

honor and invoke them by our prayers. The souls in Purgatory are helped by our good works, and they intercede for us. The members on earth are in communion with each other, inasmuch as all the good works they do are profitable to all, as long as they are united to the body of the Church, and this in proportion to their dispositions.

St. Thaddeus: "Forgiveness of sins." Our Lord has entrusted to His Church the power and means of forgiving sins such as Baptism, which forgives all the sins previously committed, and Penance which forgives all the sins committed after Baptism. In addition to these great means of forgiveness for all sins, there are also other sacraments and sacramentals which remit venial sins; but in case the reception of the sacraments is impossible, sins would be forgiven by perfect contrition, including the intention of receiving the sacraments when possible.

St. Matthias: "Resurrection of the body and life everlasting." We find in the very nature of our soul and the destiny it received from its Creator, a clear proof of future resurrection. Our soul is immortal, like the angelic spirits, but it was not made, like the angels, to be without a body; it will not, therefore, be eternally separated from the body; it shall one day be reunited with the body, so that the designs of God in its regard may be accomplished. "Life everlasting." The souls of the just will not have to await reunion with the body to enjoy life everlasting. If at the moment of death, they are fully purified, they will immediately be admitted to that happy life, that knows no alteration. A day will come, moreover, when the bodies of the just will share for all eternity with the soul the blessings of that life.

LESSON SECOND

ON GOD AND HIS PERFECTIONS

13. *Q. What is God?*
A. God is a spirit infinitely perfect.

In Holy Scripture there is often mention of members of God, such as eyes, ears, feet, etc., and of passions, such as anger, pleasure, etc., which would seem to indicate that He has a body. Numberless texts, however, declare that God is a pure spirit without any mixture of anything corporeal. Is not this a contradiction? St. Thomas beautifully explains this apparent discrepancy. God provides for all according to the properties of their nature, and therefore very appropriately He teaches us in Holy Scripture spiritual things by means of metaphors drawn by analogy from human beings, that we may by these latter understand what is meant by the former, and thereby raise ourselves to the knowledge of what is intelligible or above the senses. These metaphors are meant to convey to our feeble understanding a more correct idea of God's infinite perfections, which would otherwise be wholly beyond our comprehension. God is all eyes, because He sees all; He is all ears, because He hears all; all feet, because He is everywhere. God is a spirit, as reason itself can show us, because matter, the contrary of spirit is a composite thing, and no composite thing whatever its composition may be, is or can be absolutely perfect, as the first being must be; for a simple being is more perfect than a composite being; and the latter is necessarily posterior to the being that has put its parts together. But God is infinitely perfect and the first being, therefore there can be no composition in God, and He must be essentially a pure spirit, and a spirit infinitely perfect. God is the infinitely perfect Being, self-existent; the necessary Being without whom no finite being could exist. He eminently contains the perfections of all other beings, because He made them, and nothing is wanting to His perfections, nor can anything

be added to them. We have seen before that our soul is a spirit, and so are the angels and the demons; but although they are not material, yet they do not exclude all idea of composition, for they are creatures and their being and perfections are limited. In God there are no limits, for He is infinite.

14. *Q. Had God a beginning?*
A. God had no beginning; He always was and He always will be.

If God had had a beginning, there would have been a time when God did not exist, and then we could ask: Who gave Him existence? If God had a beginning, there must be a cause, to which He owes His being and what He is; if He had a cause, He would not be independent, would be wanting in at least one perfection, and therefore would not be God. In the same way, God would not be perfect, if at some future time He could cease to exist. To say that God had no beginning and will have no end means that He is eternal. Eternity is diametrically opposed to time. In time there are essentially two things — beginning and end, and also succession. Our soul and the angels are to a certain extent eternal, or rather everlasting, because they will have no end; but they had a beginning, and therefore they are not essentially eternal. God is the only necessary self-existent being; as He is infinitely perfect, He is unchangeable and therefore excludes all idea of succession, of beginning and end. Hence with God there is no future; but only the present. Hence He knows all things, the past and the future as well as the present, for they are all always present to Him.

15. *Q. Where is God?*
A. God is everywhere.

God is in heaven, on earth, in hell, in purgatory, in the whole universe; in a word, He is everywhere present. One may be present in a place in three ways; by his power, by his sight or knowledge, and by his being. God is everywhere present by His omnipotence, for He governs all things and keeps them in existence, otherwise they would not be able to act and would lapse into nothingness. He is everywhere by His "all-seeing eye," or knowledge, for He sees and knows all things, even what is hidden in

the innermost recesses of our mind and heart. He is everywhere also by His very being, pervading all nature and all creation.

A comparison will illustrate this. Man's presence by his power and sight is very limited, and cannot extend beyond a certain distance. But God everywhere manifests His power and sees and knows all things. In Him there is no past or future, but everything is ever present to Him. Man can exist only in one particular place at one and the same time, in the space occupied by his body. But God is in every place, everywhere at one and the same time, with His whole Being, which is one and indivisible, just as our soul is whole and entire in our whole body and also in every part of our body, which derives its life and activity from the soul. "In God," says St. Paul, "we live, move and have our being" (Acts xvii, 28). God, however, is in heaven in a special manner, for there He manifests Himself "as He is" to the angels and saints, and constitutes their endless happiness. That is why we, who are called to enjoy Him in heaven, are taught to address Him thus in our prayers: "Our Father, who art in heaven."

Because of His presence everywhere, we attribute Immensity to Him; not because He is immense in size, for being the the purest spirit, He is most simple and without size or parts. Immensity was His attribute before the creation, before there were places, for His infinite perfection includes His power to be everywhere.

16. *Q. If God is everywhere, why do we not see Him?*
A. We do not see God, because He is a pure spirit and cannot be seen with bodily eyes.

We do not see God, as we do not see our soul or our Guardian Angel, to whose care we are entrusted, for the same reason, because they are spirits, and bodily eyes are unable to see spirits, which are immaterial. Our eyes are somewhat like the camera of a photographer, that cannot possibly receive an impression except from what is material, and possessed of certain dimensions. Matter, however minutely it may be divided, remains matter and is susceptible of further division, till it becomes so small as to be imperceptible. A material being can never by division or any other way be made a spiritual being, because it is essentially composed of parts, and a spirit excludes all such

composition. The eye is like a mirror, of which the whole surface reflects the whole object before it, each part reflecting that part of the object before it. In like manner, the object present to the eye makes an impression on the eye; on the retina of which is formed a picture of the object with its appearance and dimensions, each part being there separately represented; and consequently the eye beholds the whole object with its several parts and dimensions. Hence only material objects are the natural objects of the sight, and of the other senses; and a spirit having neither parts nor dimensions cannot materially act on the senses; and therefore cannot be perceived by them.

God, being a pure spirit, cannot then be naturally the object of our sight. When therefore it is related in Holy Scripture, that God appeared to man, as when the Holy Ghost came down upon the Apostles in the form of tongues of fire, or in the form of a dove, at the Baptism of Christ; the Apostles saw that form, but did not see God Himself, because these forms were not the Divine Being itself; in heaven the Angels and Saints see God "face to face, as He is," but this is because the glorified bodies in heaven will be gifted by God with special privileges, that do not belong to bodies in their natural state. As the soul is in the body, so God is everywhere; as we cannot see our own soul or the souls of our fellow-men, and yet believe that the soul dwells in the body, because it makes its presence felt in various ways; so also we do not see God, and yet believe that He is everywhere. This is not against reason, but according to it.

17. *Q. Does God see us?*
A. God sees us and watches over us.

There is no creature invisible in His sight, says St. Paul, but "all things are naked and open to His eyes." When explaining Question 13 that God is a spirit, we said that where in Holy Scripture eyes, hands and feet are attributed to Him, these are only metaphors used to make some of God's infinite perfections more comprehensible to our mind. God has no body, no senses like ours, consequently no eyes to see as we see. To attain the same end, God has not to use the same means which we must necessarily use. To have the idea of color, the eye must furnish to the mind the object to act upon; without the helps of the

sense of sight, we could not have the idea of color. A man deaf from birth cannot have the idea of sound, etc.

The senses are but helps to the mind to furnish matter for developing ideas or thoughts. God is infinitely perfect, knows all things, and therefore needs not to acquire knowledge; He is a spirit, excluding all perfectibility and composition. The knowledge which we acquire through the senses, is eternally present to God. Being the Creator of all that is, He sees in Himself all things that are, were and ever will be, because they depend on Him. Our knowledge and our manner of acquiring it, if compared with God's knowledge, is but imperfection, and therefore incompatible with His perfections.

God also watches over us, disposing all things to the end to be attained. Some persons are rash enough to deny a divine Providence, as the atheist denies the existence of God, and with no better argument. God not only created all things, but He also directs them to a certain end. This applies not only to the species, but also to every individual of a species. Nothing happens without God's sanction or His permission. He allows evil to exist, not for its own sake, but only in as far as it tends to the common good. In this sense Christ tells us that scandals must be, and that God suffers them; as gold is tried by the fire, so are the virtuous and the good tried by the wicked. God suffers sin and vice, that He may show the treasures of His mercy; or that good may be promoted by its resistance to evil. Nothing of what God has created is bad in itself; but everything tends to a good end, although we do not always see this. But man is eminently God's work; He is the special object of God's Providence. If God takes care of the birds of the air and the lilies of the field, how much more will He take care of us, says Christ. As long then as we allow ourselves to be guided by God, we have nothing to fear; He will cause "everything to work together unto good to them that love Him."

18. *Q. Does God know all things?*

A. God knows all things, even our most secret thoughts, words, and actions.

As God's vision is different from our vision, so also is His science or knowledge different from ours. Our science contains some perfections and some imperfections. It is

perfect in that it knows with certainty a particular truth; it is imperfect in the way of acquiring that truth. To acquire it, the intellect has to proceed from given and known principles to the conclusion contained therein; this constitutes science. This denotes on the part of the intellect its aptitude to acquire science, but not its actual possession. God has all the perfections of His creatures, including knowledge, but in an infinitely more perfect degree and manner. In God there is no succession, He does not learn one thing from another; all things are equally present to Him; hence He knows them all. God first knows Himself; His divine essence as understood by Himself is the object of His knowledge. All other things outside of Himself He knows in His divine essence; all these are consequently the secondary object of His science. In His divine essence He knows all things intelligible; that is all things possible, even if they never will actually exist. He knows all that will necessarily happen, and gives laws to creatures deprived of liberty. He knows from all eternity all things that are effects of causes, whether free or necessary. He knows with the same certainty what man, given his free will, will do, under any circumstances. This, however, does not mean that man acts in a predetermined way, because God from all eternity knows that he will freely act in a certain way.

God foresees it, because man, using his free will, will act in a certain way; therefore the prevision of God does not destroy man's freedom or responsibility. A thought, a word, an action, being something, is therefore an object of God's knowledge. The Catechism says, He knows "even our most secret thoughts," in order to impress well upon our minds, that these must be regulated according to sound reason, just as well as our words and actions, since God knows equally the one as well as the other. If the soul is thoroughly persuaded of God's omniscience, it will never consent to what is forbidden by God, that is, to any wrong doing, for it knows that it is accountable to God who will punish it, since He is infinitely just. Man should walk habitually in the presence of God; nothing would contribute more powerfully to a really good life, for man would then use the faculties of his soul and the senses of his body for the purpose of pleasing Him.

19. *Q. Can God do all things?*

A. God can do all things, nothing is hard or impossible to Him.

God is Almighty, as we profess in the Creed; His power has no limits, but extends to all that actually is and to all that is possible. In man the power to act and the act itself are not identical; we have always the power to understand, but we do not always actually understand. In God there is no difference of power and act; the power is the act, as the act is the divine essence. We call it power in regard to the things that it can do. What can be done, before it actually is, is possible. Things possible, as they are an imitation of the divine essence, are infinite. Now, God's power is infinite even as His other attributes.

By whom could it be limited? Not by His own essence, because it is necessarily unlimited, or infinite. Not by any other being, because He is independent, and all beings depend on Him. God has shown His omnipotence, especially in the creation of the world; the creation of a grain of sand or a blade of grass exceeds the powers of all created nature. For God to will and to do is one and the same thing; thence it follows that one thing cannot be more difficult to Him than another. The creation of the world, or of a thousand worlds like this, is as easy to Him as the creation of a grain of sand. Nothing is impossible to Him. It would be absurd, however, to say that God cannot do what is really impossible, because this would be a contradiction in itself, a mere negation. For instance, God cannot make a square circle, because what is square cannot be a circle and vice versa; this implies a contradiction in itself, it is a mere nothing, and when God does act, He produces something, as being, and not nothing, which can have no existence. In like manner, God cannot impart to a creature His divine attributes, because this would make a creature both finite and infinite at the same time, and this is a contradiction; and God, being infinitely perfect, does not and cannot contradict Himself. This is, however, not placing restrictions on God's omnipotence; it simply means that the effect produced must be something positive, and cannot be nothing or merely negative. God can do all things, that can possibly be denoted as beings or existences, including what seems impossible to man.

Since God is omnipotent, how recklessly does man act, when he offends Him! The power that created him must sustain him at every moment of his existence, or else he would cease to be; and yet when he sins, he revolts against the Almighty! Since God is infinitely good, man should have a boundless confidence in Him. If we trust in God, we shall never be confounded. In whatever circumstances we may be, let us never forget that God can do all things, that nothing is hard or impossible to Him; this thought will inspire us with a filial confidence in His kind and merciful Providence.

20. *Q. Is God just, holy, and merciful?*

A. God is all just, all holy, all merciful as He is infinitely perfect.

The Catechism concludes the second lesson with the consideration of three of the most striking of the divine attributes. Other attributes might be enumerated; all are equally infinite. 1. God is infinitely just. Justice is for us a moral virtue, which gives every one his due. God's justice consists in His constant and efficacious will of rewarding or punishing the good or evil deeds of His rational creatures. He is their Creator and Supreme Lawgiver, who has sanctioned His laws by rewards for the observance thereof, and punishments for the offenders. The scoffer depicts God as a cruel tyrant for punishing with an eternity of torments the grievously sinful pleasures of a moment; but he understands not the malice of sin nor God's infinite justice. God does not punish sin more severely them it deserves. No one is compelled to sin; to be guilty of mortal sin, we must not only know that our action is against God's will, but also do it freely and deliberately. Hence we fully deserve the punishment the infinitely just God will inflict on us for our sin. On the other hand, good deeds must necessarily have their reward, because God is most just. We often see great sinners prosper in this world; their previous good works may thus receive their reward in this life; while the virtuous and the saints store up their rewards chiefly for the life to come, although even in this life they have a larger share of genuine happiness than that enjoyed by those the world considers as happy. The thought of God's justice should keep us from committing sin and encourage us to do good.

2. God is infinitely holy. Holiness in man signifies perfection of moral character; he is holy who keeps the laws of God perfectly and is free from deliberate sin, and conforms his will in all things with that of God. In God holiness is His free will united and identified with His wisdom. Hence God's free volition, acts or decrees are always in accordance with His infinite wisdom. Holiness in God means, His unchangeable will to act conformably to His perfections, and includes His supreme love of good and His supreme hatred of sin. God loves good, because He is the author of it. In the same proportion as He loves virtue, He hates sin, which in His eyes is the worst of evils; of all His infinite perfections holiness will forever be the special object of the praises of angels and saints. His love of virtue induces Him to reward with an eternity of delights those who hunger and thirst after justice; His hatred of sin punishes eternally in hell those who depart this life with the guilt of mortal sin.

3. God is infinitely merciful. Although in God there is no difference between His attributes and His essence, although all are infinite, yet there is no attribute more apparent to us than His mercy. By His mercy we understand His goodness and His indulgence towards all the unfortunate, especially towards sinners. To the fallen angels no mercy was shown; the very moment they sinned God's justice punished them with an eternal hell. Man might have justly been treated in the same way, but mercy was shown to him. Our dear Lord's mission upon earth was meant to give us a clearer idea of His mercy to us. Man had deserved to be excluded forever from heaven; he was helpless, but the Saviour extended to him a succoring hand and restored him again to the friendship of God. Not only once does He rescue him, but over and over again. The father of the prodigal son was indulgent towards him, but this is only a weak reflexion of God's infinite mercy towards us. Heaven would remain deserted, if God did not show us mercy; it is owing to His mercy that we are not utterly lost. God is infinitely perfect, and therefore He possesses these and all other perfections in an infinite degree. Christ ordered us to be perfect as our heavenly Father is perfect, not because we could possibly be infinitely perfect, but that we may, however distantly, imitate our Father in heaven as far as lies in our power.

LESSON THIRD

ON THE UNITY AND TRINITY OF GOD

21. *Q. Is there but one God?*
A. Yes; there is but one God.

It is surprising that anything so clear could have been ignored by nearly all the nations of the earth. Yet before Christ's coming upon earth all nations, with the exception of the Jewish people, adored a multitude of gods, and many rendered divine honors to animals, reptiles, and even inanimate things. Since the propagation of the Gospel, a clearer knowledge of the Divinity has dissipated the darkness of idolatry in a great many countries. But even now there are millions of men who worship a multitude of idols. The followers of Brahma have divinized almost every thing in creation; for them everything is an emanation of the divinity, a part of God; this is pantheism plain and simple. They know no better. Although human reason, without the aid of Revelation, is sufficient to prove the unity of God, reason with them has been so obscured, that they do not perceive their error. In the third century of the Christian era, the heresy of Manes admitted two gods; the one essentially good, and the other essentially evil; the one creator of all that is good, the other creator of all that is evil. Unable to explain how an infinitely good God could allow so much evil, he concluded that there must be a god who is the cause of all the evil. This false system was partly renewed by a few atheistic philosophers in the seventeenth century. Its absurdity is apparent on its very face. The evil god of the Manicheans would be infinitely imperfect, or rather he would be nothing else than a negation. Supposing the two gods to be equal, the one must necessarily undo all the work of the other; supposing them to be unequal, there would be nothing but good or nothing but evil; but this is contrary to the actual state of things. We have seen that all the evils in the world are not incon-

sistent with the existence of but one God, who is infinitely good.

22. Q. Why can there be but one God?

A. There can be but one God, because God, being supreme and infinite, cannot have an equal.

The Catechism gives us two reasons why there can be but one God, viz: because He is supreme and infinite. God is the Supreme Being, on whom every other being depends. If He had an equal, this equal must be independent, otherwise he could not be God; in this case, there would be at least one being independent of the Supreme Being. But God is infinite and therefore cannot have an equal. If there were more gods than one, none of them would be infinite; one would lack what the others have; one would be limited, v. g., in power, by the others. Let us suppose that there are two; they either differ from one another, or they do not. If they do not differ, they are one and the same God; if they differ, they differ in a perfection or an imperfection. If they differ in a perfection, the possessor of that perfection surpasses the other; if an imperfection, the one tainted with the imperfection is not infinite and could not be God. Besides these, other proofs can be given of the necessary unity of God. God's omnipotence is one of them. Supposing more gods than one, none of them could oppose the will of the others; without the consent of all, nothing could be done. Moreover, none of them could be all-powerful, because he would have no power over the others. Another proof may be adduced from the unity and harmony that exists in the universe. Things so diverse cannot be harmoniously arranged and regulated, unless by a principle of unity. Therefore God is one. The following supposition will make this plain. Let us suppose two gods and call them A and B; as the divine nature of both would be most perfect, the greatest freedom of action should be inherent in both. Now as the creation of the world and its order is a free divine act, A and B might differ about effecting it or carrying it out. A, for instance, would will the creation of the world, and B would will the reverse. If both agreed to create it, should the world be created and arranged as A wills, against the will of B; in that case, B would not be God at all, because his will and power would be frustrated. The same would apply to A, if the reverse

happened. Therefore it is impossible, that there should be more gods than one; and reason tells us that St. Paul was right when he said: "There is no God but one." (I Cor. viii, 4.)

23. *Q. How many Persons are there in God?*

A. In God there are three Divine Persons; really distinct and equal in all things, the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost.

We understand by person an intelligent being, complete in himself, wanting nothing to make him an individual of his kind, undivided and indivisible into other similar or equal beings, capable of self-consciousness and acting by himself and performing the acts proper to his nature. Man's body, taken separately, is not a person, because it is not complete, but only a part of the human nature. The human soul taken separately, for the same reason, is not a person. The Angels in heaven, like the demons in hell, are persons, because, although spirits, they are complete rational beings.

Reason teaches that there is a God, and one God only. Faith proceeds further and teaches that in one God there are three really distinct divine Persons. This dogma is not against, but above reason. Reason unaided by Revelation could never discover it. It is, however, not against reason, because reason could never prove the intrinsic impossibility of this dogma. The word Person is nowhere in Holy Scripture applied to God. The Church uses the word to express that not only the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost are not merely three different denominations or three different aspects of one and the same individual divine nature, but that in God there are really three divine distinct subsistences in one and the same divine nature. It is clear, however, that speaking of God the word person does not exactly convey the same idea as when speaking of man. Three divine persons are one and the same divine nature, whereas three human persons are three numerically distinct individual natures. This Christian dogma is believed by most of our dissident Brethren. Numerous texts of the New Testament clearly explain the existence of Three Divine Persons in one God. St. John in his first Epistle tells us that "there are three that give testimony in heaven, the Father, the Son and

the Holy Ghost, and these three are one." (I John v, 7.) The Holy Trinity revealed itself at the Baptism of Christ. The Holy Ghost descended and rested upon Him in the form of a dove, and the voice of the Father was heard to say: "This is My well beloved Son." When Christ sent His Apostles to preach the Gospel, He told them: "Go and teach ye all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." (Mat. xxviii, 19.) In the Old Law this dogma was shrouded in greater obscurity; to know it was the privilege of but a few chosen souls. There are texts in the Old Testament which explain the existence of Three Persons in one God; but they are not as obvious and clear as those in the New.

24. *Q. Is the Father God?*

A. The Father is God and the first Person of the Blessed Trinity.

The Divinity of the Father has never been called into question by any believer in the existence of God. It seems too clear; and those even, who, like Lucifer, wish to rise above themselves cannot deny that, if there is a God, it must surely be the Person who is the principle or source of the others. When we say that God the Father is the First Person, we do not mean that He is the First in time or authority. The Catechism teaches us that all Three Divine Persons are alike, equal in all things. The Father is eternal as the Son is eternal, for if He is Father from all eternity, the Son must equally be eternal, for otherwise the Father could not be Father from all eternity. These relations suppose one another.

25. *Q. Is the Son God?*

A. The Son is God and the second Person of the Blessed Trinity.

This dogma of our faith has had its opponents in the person and the followers of a fallen priest, gifted by nature, who allowed his disappointed vanity and pride to get the better of him. In the beginning of the fourth century, after the blood of the martyrs had flowed in streams, after the aurora of peace had dawned for the Church with the elevation of Constantine to the imperial throne, after the devil had found out that the blood of martyrs was

the seed of Christians, and had planned other attacks on the Church founded by Christ, this emissary of Satan appeared. At first he dared not openly proclaim his heresy; its absurdity was too apparent. The faith preached by the Apostles and their successors had taken too deep root in the souls of men for him to attempt to extirpate it. He advanced that before creating the world God created the Word, and afterwards through the Word made the world. The Word was therefore far more perfect than the rest of creation; but was yet only a creature. His Bishop tried by all means in his power to bring him back to the fold, but to no avail. Pope St. Sylvester ordered an ecumenical council to meet at Nice for the month of June, 325. Emperor Constantine was present, and the council was presided over by the Pope's legate. Arianism was condemned and the Divinity of the Son proclaimed. Arius persisted in his error, and was afterwards struck by the hand of God and died a most miserable death.

God the Son may be considered as God only, or as both God and man since His Incarnation. St. John, the eagle of the sacred writers, explains in his Gospel the eternal generation or birth of the Son. "In the beginning," says he, "the Word was, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." Christ said of Himself: "I and the Father are one." The whole New Testament furnishes us on every page with abundant proofs of the divinity of Jesus Christ. He worked miracles by His own power. Reason tells us that no man can of himself perform an action above the powers of nature; a miracle, therefore, is a clear proof of God's agency, and, as Christ performed numerous miracles in His own name, He must be God. The divinity of Christ is therefore not against reason; but this conclusion reason logically infers from effects that are undeniable.

26. Q. Is the Holy Ghost God?

A. The Holy Ghost is God, and the third Person of the Blessed Trinity.

Those who denied the divinity of the Son, naturally denied also that of the Holy Ghost. If the Son is not God, neither is the Holy Ghost. After the condemnation of the Arians by the Council of Nice, the heretics did

not think it politic on their part to retail the same old falsehood. A scandalous and most cruel intruder into the See of Constantinople, named Macedonius, became the patron of a new heresy, known by his name which denied the divinity of the Holy Ghost. In the fourth century as in the sixteenth it was fallen and rebellious priests or bishops, who afflicted their mother, the Church, so that she had to repudiate them; history repeats itself. Arius and Macedonius, like Luther and Calvin were ordained to teach the truth, but abusing their sacred trust, they became like Judas, the enemies of their Master. The usurpation by Macedonius of the Patriarchal throne of Constantinople, rendered famous by so many holy predecessors, had cost the life of 3,000 Catholics who were massacred by the troops of Constantius. Pope St. Damasus called the second ecumenical council, the first of the four held at Constantinople. In this council the doctrine defined at Nice was reaffirmed, and in the profession of faith the divinity of the Holy Ghost was declared a dogma of faith. The Catholic doctrine is that the Holy Ghost is the same substance, the same nature as the Father and the Son and therefore one and the same God with them. The Holy Ghost is called in Holy Scripture God and Lord. Holy Scripture attributes besides to the Holy Ghost divine operations, such as miracles, remission of sins, sanctification, etc.

Why are the three Divine Persons called God the Father, God the Son, God the Holy Ghost? The Father is called Father, because the two other Persons proceed from Him, and especially because God the Son is born of Him. The Son is born of the Father through His intelligence, and is the perfect image of the Father. To express, therefore, that the Son proceeds from the Father by his intelligence, He is called in Divine Revelation the *Son of God*. The Third Person of the Blessed Trinity proceeds by the will, He is the Love of the Father and the Son; but love does not consist, like the knowledge of the understanding, in a spiritual image. Therefore the love of the Father and the Son, in its origin is not an image of the Father and the Son, and consequently the Holy Ghost cannot be called the Son of God. Why the third Person of the Blessed Trinity is called Holy Ghost may be explained in the following manner: The third Person is the mutual love of the Father

and the Son; now love is the principal action of the will; the affections of the will are often expressed by the name of spirit, so we say: The spirit of faith, the spirit of prayer, to express affection, and delight in praying or in believing. So we say also: This community is animated by a very good spirit. For a well-founded reason, therefore, the third Person who proceeds from the will and is the love of the Father and the Son, is called Holy Spirit or Holy Ghost. The Spirit of God is called *Holy,* which Holy Scripture does not apply to the Father and the Son, because holiness, is an affection of the will and not of the understanding, and therefore the third Person who proceeds from the will, is very appropriately called the *Holy* Ghost.

27. *Q. What do you mean by the Blessed Trinity?*
A. By the Blessed Trinity I mean one God in three Divine Persons.

The great mystery of three divine Persons in one God is called the Trinity. The word has been adopted by the Church to express the great mystery, representing unity under one aspect, and multiplicity under another; unity of nature and substance and multiplicity or diversity of Persons. This mystery like all other mysteries is of course above reason; reason left to itself, however perfected, could never know it; but it is not against reason. To be against reason this mystery should be thus expressed: Three gods are one God or three Divine Persons are one Person. But faith does not teach us that the Three Divine Persons are one Person, or that they are three gods; but it teaches us unity and identity of the divine nature, and Trinity of Persons, which is something altogether different.

28. *Q. Are the three Divine Persons equal in all things?*
A. The three Divine Persons are equal in all things.

The three Divine Persons are equally eternal, omnipotent, just, merciful, etc., because all attributes depend upon nature, and the divine nature being the same in all three, their attributes must be the same. If in one man there were different persons, they would of course be equally old, wise and powerful, because they would have

the same body and the same soul, which is the nature of man. Thus it is with the three Divine Persons; they have the same nature, but differ in person. But the three Divine Persons being equal in all things, whence comes it that they differ? They only differ by the relations of origin, for the Father was not born, nor does He proceed from any one; but the Son is born of the Father, and the Holy Ghost proceeds from the Father and the Son. In these mutual relations consists the only difference; except this everything else is common to the three Divine Persons. They being equal in all, why is it that in Scripture omnipotence is particularly ascribed to the Father, wisdom to the Son and holiness to the Holy Ghost? Is this permissible, considering that omnipotence, wisdom and holiness are equal in the three Divine Persons? It is, because in God there are perfections, which bear a special relation to the properties of each, and naturally tend to express what is proper to each, or in what each differs from the others. It is, moreover, useful, because by ascribing a particular perfection to one Person, we express explicitly the properties of that Person. So did Christ ascribe all His divine works to the Father, although they belonged to Himself and to the Holy Ghost as well. He did so to acknowledge the divine Fathership and to show that He differed in person from the Father.

Omnipotence is ascribed to the Father because it naturally belongs to Him, who is the source and origin of all. God the Father is the source of the two other Persons, and of all that exists; as an explicit profession of that belief we ascribe omnipotence to the Father. Wisdom is the natural product of the understanding, but the Son is the image which God has of Himself by His understanding; hence we ascribe wisdom to the Son, to profess that He was born of the Father by His intelligence. Holiness consists in perfect love of the will of all that is good; now the Holy Ghost is the most perfect love of the Father and the Son, and therefore we ascribe in a particular manner holiness to the Holy Ghost. So it is with the external works of God relating to man. Works of omnipotence, such as the creation of the world, etc., are more particularly ascribed to the Father; works of wisdom, such as the divine ruling of the world, to the Son; and the works in which God's love shines most intensely, such as remis-

sion of sins, communication of graces, to the Holy Ghost.

29. *Q. Are the three Divine Persons one and the same God?*

A. The three Divine Persons are one and the same God, having one and the same divine nature and substance.

Reason tells us, even without the aid of Revelation, that there is but one God. Revelation teaches us that there are three Divine Persons and that they are but one God, because they have the same nature and substance. In the preceding pages we have partially explained the great distinction between nature and person. The motion of my hands and feet, sensations internal or external, are actions which are attributed to me, because I move my hands and feet, *I* feel, *I* understand, *I* will, etc., *I* represents not only my body, nor only my soul, but the being composed of both these substances. My actions are not the actions of others. A substance is that which exists in itself, and does not need another subject in which to exist. A soul is a substance; color is not a substance, because it does not exist in itself. I am not only a substance, because I exist in myself, independently without having to adhere to another subject, but I am also the principle or origin of actions which are attributed to me and cannot be attributed to another. All this makes me a person. My soul is not a person, because it is only a part of my being and is now dependent on my body, in order to form one complete and composite being, which is my person. An Angel in heaven, although he has a nature similar to my soul, is a person; because he is complete in himself, not having been created to be united to a body. Nature is that which differentiates the species; all that which constitutes man, is the nature of man. In man nature cannot exist independently of the individual, that is the person to whom the nature belongs. Christ is an exception to this rule; He assumed the nature of man, and yet He has not a human personality; His divine and His human nature being united in His divine Person. The difference of nature, substance and person in created beings explains to us to some extent the unity of nature and distinction of Persons, which exist in God, but very imperfectly. The nature of God is the same in the three divine Per-

sons; in created beings nature as really existing differs from that of other individuals. A rational soul and a material body is the nature of man; taken universally, or in a general sense, nature does not really exist; when taken singularly, that is, such as it exists in individuals, it is similar, but not identically or numerically, the same, in all individuals of the same species. In God the divine nature is one and identically the same in each of the three divine Persons. Hence the Church sings in the Preface of the Blessed Trinity, "one God, one Lord, not in the unity of person, but in the Trinity of substance," that is, in God there is unity of nature, unity of substance, and Trinity of Persons; this is the greatest and sublimest of mysteries.

30. *Q. Can we fully understand how the three Divine Persons are one and the same God?*

A. We cannot fully understand how the three Divine Persons are one and the same God, because this is a mystery.

From the explanation given of the preceding question, we have formed an idea of the Unity and the Trinity of God; we understand, to a certain extent, that in one God there can be three Persons; and from Revelation we know this to be so. Yet the Catechism adds that we cannot fully understand it. To understand a thing is to know it by its causes; we reason from a known principle to a conclusion, which is contained in it, by comparing the terms. My reasoning stops the moment the terms are no longer understood. If I do not know the properties of an object, I cannot either know whether these properties are to be found in any other object. God is infinite, He is therefore infinitely intelligible; but my intelligence is limited, therefore it cannot fully understand or grasp an infinite object. If I could fully understand all about God, He would be limited and circumscribed, and no greater than the capacity of my mind; in other words, He would not be infinitely perfect. Since then I do not fully know what God is, I cannot fully know and understand how in one God there are Three Divine Persons. The reason why I cannot fully understand it is, because it is a mystery to my intellect and to every created and limited intellect. We know by Revelation that it is so; reason has nothing to

oppose to show that it is impossible: for there is no arguing from a principle, which is not fully known, no contradiction can be detected in the terms. God is Triune, that is, one God in three divine Persons; therefore I must logically admit it, although I do not fully understand it.

31. *Q. What is a mystery?*
A. A mystery is a truth, which we cannot fully understand.

A mystery is a truth; a truth of which the intellect can be absolutely certain. We believe mysteries, that is, those truths of faith which we cannot understand, just as reasonably as those that are the direct and natural object of our understanding. The certainty of the mysteries of faith does not depend upon our convictions of the existence of divine revelation. It would be absurd to say that the certainty of faith is not greater than that of human sciences, which may be acquired by our mental faculties. The certainty of the existence and truth of divine revelation is not faith itself, nor the ultimate reason of our faith; it is but a preliminary condition of our faith; for we believe a person not because he has spoken, but because he is trustworthy and truthful; the certainty that he has spoken is but a condition to admitting his testimony. Hence it follows that the certainty of our faith, resting as it does ultimately upon the infallible truth of God Himself, is greater than our certainty of the existence of Divine revelation, because we believe in the existence or fact of divine revelation, on account of the proofs given us of such a fact; but we believe in the truths revealed, which are the object of our faith, because God, who is truth itself and knows all things, has revealed them. There can be no greater certainty than that given us by the testimony of God Himself. The infidel will say: "I do not believe the doctrine of Christ, because it contains mysteries, which I do not understand, and I cannot believe what I cannot understand." We will show how unfounded and ridiculous this objection is. We understand by mysteries truths of which a created intelligence by its own powers cannot discover or understand their nature; it cannot of itself know that it is; and after the existence has been revealed, it can not adequately know what, how and why it is. For instance, the existence of

the Blessed Trinity could not be discovered by reason, for it cannot understand how and why there are three Persons in one God; therefore this truth is a mystery. Is this against reason? On the contrary, it would be against reason not to believe these revealed truths; because reason teaches us that there are and should be mysteries in the infinite Being. The existence of mysteries follows directly from the infinite perfections of God and from the limits of a created understanding. The limited cannot grasp, comprehend the infinite, or restrict it within its own limits. Reason even shows that God can reveal mysteries above our comprehension, for His knowledge is infinite, and ours is only finite; revelation does not change the nature of our mind, though it may greatly enlighten it. In heaven we shall understand these truths as they are in themselves, for our understanding, aided by a supernatural help, the light of glory, will then be capable of understanding, without however fully comprehending the infinite. It is equally clear that we cannot call into doubt the mysteries, which God deigns to reveal to us; because they are founded like all other revealed truths on the infallible truths of God, and are perfectly true and certain. Though they are above reason they are not, therefore, against reason; above and against are not synonymous terms. Hence it follows that those who reject mysteries, because they surpass their understanding, do so because they consider that no one is wiser than they, and that all that is false, which surpasses their puny mental capacity. They deny God's existence and will have no one to be above them. They overlook the fact that in their daily lives, in their daily employment, they take for granted a great many truths, which they are unable to account for, though these are none the less a mystery to them. They are like a child, that would refuse to be instructed by his parents or teachers, and would admit only what he could learn by his own personal experience.

LESSON FOURTH

ON CREATION

32. *Q. Who created heaven and earth and all things?*
A. God created heaven and earth and all things.

This answer has already been sufficiently explained above in (question 2).

33. *Q. How did God create heaven and earth?*
A. God created heaven and earth out of nothing, by His word only; that is, by a single act of His all-powerful will.

In the beginning God created heaven and earth, are the first words of the Holy Bible and they carry more weight than the heavy volumes of the naturalists and the philosophers. They form the basis not only of revelation, but also of our way of considering God and the world; they free our minds from the chaos of all the myths. The true idea of creation was unknown to pagan Greek and Roman antiquity. We do not realize the importance of these words, because that truth has been impressed upon our minds from our infancy, and we have grown used to consider the world from that point of view. To others, however, who had not been as favored as we, it seemed an insoluble problem. A number of absurd theories prevailed even among those, who formed of old the vanguard of civilization and learning. The mother of the Machabees addressed to her dying sons these words: "Know that God has brought all this forth out of nothing." We believe, like her, that God created the world out of nothing; we look upon this fundamental dogma as the basis of faith and Christian life. God created heaven and earth by His word only, or, as the Catechism explains it, by an act of His all-powerful will. If, in Holy Scripture the sacred writer, when giving the history of creation, says that God spoke and commanded things to be, this must not be understood as meaning that

God needs to speak words to create; He speaks not by word of mouth; but as words are meant to convey our ideas, so the creation of heaven and earth in time was the expression of God's eternal will. He willed from all eternity that the world should be, not that it should exist from all eternity, but in time, that is, in the beginning of time, because time began simultaneously with creation. God was absolutely free to create or not, hence absolute optimism is essentially false, that is, that God could not create a world more perfect than this. Seven times we find it repeated that God said that whatever He had made was good; as it came from His hand, there was no evil in it; yet to deny that it might have been better, would be limiting God's omnipotence. But this world is *relatively* the best, because it possesses that degree of excellence to which the Creator decreed to raise it. The universe, says St. Thomas, is like a wonderful harp, the melodies of which repeat to us the beauty and the delights of life eternal.

34. *Q. Which are the chief creatures of God?*
A. The chief creatures of God are Angels and men.

God's omnipotence, wisdom, and love have called creatures into existence in the following order: First, the Spirits or Angels, then bodies or matter, and lastly man, who is composed of both body and spirit. Reason, unaided by Revelation, could never know of the existence of a world of spirits. Relying on Scripture and Tradition, the Church proposes to our belief the existence of superior beings, pure and incorporeal, endowed with superhuman intelligence and knowledge. They are called Angels, which means messengers; the name given them designates their ministry, not their nature. They are the first of creatures, because they reproduce more perfectly than all other creatures the image of God. The very idea of creation would lead us to regard the creation of pure spirits as more probable and more conformable to the idea of God than that of material beings. If God had created no spirit superior to the spirit of man, there would not be in the universe any image that perfectly reproduced the divine nature and life; as man's soul is embodied in matter, it can but slowly disengage itself from sensible images and rise

to the height of universal and eternal ideas. If God has made a corporeal nature wholly different from Himself, says St. Thomas, why should He not have made a substantial nature similar to Himself? As in material creation there is an infinite variety of different objects, why should not God have created a world of spirits divided into different hierarchies? To deny the existence of Angels would by degrees lead us to deny that of the spirits which animate our bodies, and would thus open the door to materialism. The Sadducees, in the time of the Apostles, said that there is no resurrection, no angel, no spirit. Materialism is but the repetition of the same absurdity. Man's soul is the image of God; he is the most imperfect image of God, as the angels are the most perfect. The angels are classified according to the degree of their intelligence, which becomes more and more perfect as they come nearer to God. The spirit of man forms the lowest step in this ladder of perfection; the Cherubim and Seraphim, the highest. Revelation divides the Angels into nine hierarchies, viz.: Seraphim, Cherubim, Thrones, Dominations, Principalities, Powers, Virtues, Archangels, Angels. The number of the good Angels is incalculable; they are in Holy Scripture numbered by legions and by thousands and thousands. These millions of Angels were created in the beginning of time along with matter; how long before the creation of this visible world, Scripture does not say, and it is impossible for man to calculate the time.

"Thou hast made him a little less than the Angels" are the words used by the Prophet to express the sublime dignity of man. He is but a little less than the Angels, he comes next in order. Man is the Masterpiece of God's visible creation; he is the king of all its beings; for him they were created, that he might by the sight of God's wonderful works be brought to a clearer knowledge of the Creator.

There is one among those who were made a little less than the Angels, who, although her human nature is in itself below the nature of Angels, is greater than the greatest of Angels. Her sublime dignity of Mother of God raises her far above the whole angelic hierarchy, for she is the Queen of Angels, the Blessed Virgin Mary.

35. *Q. What are Angels?*

A. Angels are pure spirits without a body, created to adore and enjoy God in heaven.

The Angels are pure spirits without a body; they have not been created to be united with a body. In this they differ from man's soul, and in that they are created, they differ from God; they are pure spirits, endowed with understanding and free will. The Angels are represented to us under a human form. Even Holy Scripture often speaks of visible appearances of Angels. This is not because they have a body, but because they could not otherwise become visible to us, and we could not represent them to ourselves. They are not substantially united to the bodies they assume, as our soul is to our body; they do not appear thus before the throne of God. The Prophets attribute wings to them to express with what incredible rapidity they pass from one end of the world to the other to obey the commands of God. So we must also attach a spiritual meaning to what Scripture calls the vessels or censers, in which they offer to God the perfume of our prayers. The Angels are pure spirits, that is, intelligent substances, that think, understand and will; they possess these faculties in a far more eminent degree than we do. They are more enlightened than we; their science is deeper and more comprehensive than ours, so that the lowest of Angels is wiser than the wisest of men. The primary object of God in creating the Angels was the manifestation of His eternal glory, to which He was prompted by His desire to share with others His own infinite happiness. They were created; and hence they had obligations to fulfil as all other creatures; they are insignificant, compared with the majesty of God; as intelligent beings, they are bound to appreciate God's benefits in their regard, and profess by the highest act of religion, or adoration, their entire dependence upon Him. Their life is one continual act of adoration since, being unencumbered with a body, nothing prevents them from rendering continually to God the homage of their praises. They enjoy God, because they see Him in the light of the beatific vision; their happiness now will be ours also one day, when we shall see God face to face. Nothing on earth can be compared to it. In the ranks of the Angels voids have been made by the fall of many; their forfeited

thrones, even the highest, may be occupied by those, who during their life on earth shall have merited them by their virtues and good works. In the house of the heavenly Father, says our Saviour, there are many mansions; virtue will be rewarded to its full extent, and Lucifer's throne will find, or has found, an occupant among the children of men.

36. *Q. Were the angels created for any other purpose?* A. The angels were also created to assist before the throne of God and to minister unto Him; they have often been sent as messengers from God to man; and are also appointed our guardians.

Scripture teaches us that there are thousands and thousands of angels that assist before the throne of God; they minister unto Him by fulfilling His commands. Their duty in heaven is, as we have seen in the preceding question, to adore Him. They minister unto Him by presenting to Him the prayers and good works of men. As ministers or attendants present to the sovereign the requests of his subjects, so, according to Scripture, do the angels act as mediators and present to God the requests or prayers of men. They have often been sent as messengers from God to man. Three angels are mentioned by name in Scripture as having been sent by God as special messengers. St. Michael, whose name signifies *Who is like to God.* Gabriel, *Strength of God* and Raphael, *Medicine of God.* Michael was sent to the Prophet Daniel to foretell the things that would befall his people in the last days, and to comfort him. Gabriel was sent to Zachary to foretell the birth of John the Baptist, and also to the Virgin of Nazareth, to announce to her that she had been chosen to be the Mother of God. Raphael was sent to Tobias. In other passages of Scripture other angels, who were sent as messengers, are not named. The angels are, besides, appointed our guardians. That every man has from his birth a guardian angel is not a dogma of faith, as the Church has never solemnly pronounced it to be so, but the unanimous belief of the faithful, founded on Scripture and the testimony of the Fathers, make it presumptuous to deny it. Scripture clearly confirms this doctrine: "See that you despise not one of these little ones: for I say to you, that *their* angels always see the face of My

Father, who is in heaven" (Mat. xviii, 10). Christ would not have said "their angels," if each of them had not a separate guardian angel. It seems also very probable that countries and provinces as well as individual churches and parishes have their own guardian angels. Thus St. Michael was the Protector of the Israelites, and is now the Protector and Defender of the Church of God. Gabriel in his message to Daniel, speaks of an Angel Protector of Persia. The duties of our guardian angel are to protect us against the assaults of the evil one, who "goes around like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour;" to offer our prayers to God, that is, he prays with us and intercedes with God for us; and especially to protect our soul at the supreme moment of death, which decides our lot for eternity. At the last hour, our need of help will be greater, but our guardian angel will be with us. The services of our guardian angel demand of us due respect for his high dignity and holiness, confidence in his powerful intercession, gratitude for his benefits and docility to his inspirations.

37. *Q. Were the angels, as God created them, good and happy?*

A. The angels, as God created them, were good and happy.

When relating the creation of the world in six days, the sacred writer adds after the work of each day: "and God saw that it was good." Whatever God makes, must necessarily be good; it would be repugnant to His infinite perfections to create anything that is evil. Philosophers prove that all beings, as such or in themselves, are good; as God is being itself, so also He is goodness itself. The more a creature partakes of being, the more it participates of goodness. In the preceding questions we have seen that the angels are the nearest to God, and relatively His most perfect images; it follows then also that they are, of their nature, better than other created beings. The angels, as God created them, were not only good as beings, but also good as to the end for which God created them. Happiness followed goodness. That which fully satisfies the cravings of man's heart, constitutes happiness; where these cravings are not fully satisfied, there is no perfect happiness. Supreme happiness consists in the enjoyment of all possible good; now God is goodness itself; the angels were

created to enjoy Him; therefore in that enjoyment they find supreme happiness. This goodness and happiness, however, was contingent upon the good use they would make of God's benefits. In their case, as in the case of all other rational beings, God's law was to have a sanction. The angels were endowed like man with free will and understanding; as free beings, they were free to choose between fulfilling and not fulfilling their obligations, and were responsible for their acts; but God could not be indifferent as to what they would choose to do. The next question will teach us that a great many of them did not fulfil their obligations, and that they were therefore punished. The faithful angels were confirmed in grace and received their heavenly reward. Although free now as before, their freedom has become more perfect, so that it will never be in danger of being abused. This was also the case with the Apostles after they had received the Holy Ghost; they were confirmed in grace, that is, they retained their freedom as before, but by a special privilege of the Almighty, they were enabled never to abuse that freedom. Peter's fall occurred before he was thus confirmed in grace; the Apostles after the descent of the Holy Ghost, never deviated from the path of righteousness, and so there is no danger, that the faithful angels will ever rise against their God and Maker.

38. *Q. Did all the angels remain good and faithful?*
A. All the angels did not remain good and faithful, many of them sinned and were cast into hell, and these were called devils or bad angels.

Impeccability was not at first a privilege of the angelic nature. According to St. Augustine, it seems that in the creation of intellectual natures, God wished, in a certain way to honor the work of His hands. He leaves freedom to the angel, as later also to man. That faculty, the most glorious attribute of intelligence, was the occasion of the fall of both angel and man. Holy Scripture, without unveiling entirely this mystery of iniquity, the consequences of which will endure for all eternity, names nevertheless the leader of the revolting angels against the majesty of God. "O Lucifer," so writes the Prophet Isaiah (xiv, 12–15), "who didst rise in the morning? Thou saidst in thy heart: I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne

above the stars of God. I will ascend above the height of the clouds, I will be like the Most High. But yet thou shalt be brought down to hell, into the depth of the pit." "Thou a cherub stretched out," says Ezechiel (xxviii, 14–16), "and protecting, and I set thee in the holy mountain of God, thou hadst walked in the midst of the stones of fire. Thou wast perfect in thy ways from the day of thy creation, until iniquity was found in thee . . . and I cast thee out from the mountain of God." A thought of pride was the immediate cause of the fall of the angels, just as pride caused that of our first parents, and is for us the beginning of all evil. A tradition has it, that God revealed to the angels the mystery of the Incarnation, wherein the second Person of the Blessed Trinity would assume human nature, uniting it to His divinity in one person. A man would be God and the Cherubim and Seraphim would have to adore Him. Lucifer, puffed up with his own excellence, revolted. Pride and the abuse of liberty, equally hurtful to angel and man, originated in heaven among the revolting angels, is continued on earth and will be perpetuated forever in the abyss of hell. But while Lucifer and the other rebel angels nourished their foolish projects, the Archangel Michael exclaimed: "Who is like God?" A great battle in heaven followed. Michael and his angels fought with the dragon and his adherents. The good angels prevailed and that old serpent, called the devil and Satan, who seduceth the whole world, was cast out with his adherents into hell. (Apoc. xii, 7–9.) Without a moment for repentance they received the due punishment of their sin. Let it not be imagined that God punished them too severely. We have seen in the foregoing pages that God is infinitely just and cannot possibly inflict excessive punishment. The fallen angels are called devils, and their leader, Lucifer, the light-bearer, is called in the region of evil, Satan, that is, the enemy of all truth, of all justice, of all good, the undying enemy of all the souls created to the image of God, and destined to earn, by the practice of virtue, the thrones vacated by the pride of Lucifer and his adherents.

LESSON FIFTH

ON OUR FIRST PARENTS AND THE FALL

39. *Q. Who were the first man and woman?*
A. The first man and woman were Adam and Eve.

After God had created all the irrational beings, He created man to His own image and likeness. He formed his body of the slime of the earth and breathed into his face the breath of life, and man became a living soul. But Adam, the first man, had no helper like himself. Then the Lord God cast a deep sleep upon Adam, and when he was fast asleep, He took one of his ribs, and filled up flesh for it, and built the rib which He had taken from Adam into a woman. This is the name Adam gave her, although the word used in the original conveyed more than the English word implies. When for their disobedience, Adam and the woman were cast out of Paradise, Adam gave her the name by which she is known, Eve, that is, mother of all the living. The origin of man, his extraction from the slime of the earth was to be a reminder to him that he is but dust, that he owed all to God his Maker. The woman was taken from a rib near the heart of Adam, to remind her, that although not man's slave, but his equal, man was to be the head of the wife. This history of the formation of man, does not contradict the fact that he was created; because the slime of the earth and the rib of Adam were originally made of nothing, and because neither the slime nor the rib could, without a creative act, become the body of the first man and that of the first woman. However clearly Scripture testifies to the unity of the human species, yet certain so-called philosophers doubt it. All the races of men on the earth descend from that first couple. All other theories are positively against sound reason; as their arguments utterly fail to disprove the Scripture narrative, or to give any scientific proof of their theories; this can most easily be explained by the natural increase of mankind from one couple in six thousand years. In the

human family there are different races, but only *one species.* An objection is drawn from the difference of color between the black and the white races; but difference of color does not constitute a difference of species, and is easily explainable by natural causes. The same must be said of the Indian races of the American continent; we may not know to what race of the human family they belong, nor how this continent came to be settled before its discovery by the whites; but a study of geography shows that people from other continents may have at an early period found access to these shores. The evidence of Scripture as to the unity of the human family is more in accordance with true science than any theory put forth by free-thinkers.

40. *Q. Were Adam and Eve innocent and holy, when they came from the hand of God?*

A. Adam and Eve were innocent and holy, when they came from the hand of God.

The ancestors of the human species were placed by God in the earthly Paradise, in the brightness of stainless purity, under the eye of God, their Creator and Father, in the midst of a smiling and submissive nature, among the riches of a fruitful soil. Man was in the state of innocence and holiness, a more perfect reflection of God. Easier is it to conceive than to describe that state; the regrets of a fallen posterity have given it in the remembrance of peoples the name of the golden age. The heart of man would never have known the warfare of passions, the grief of ineffectual cravings, dissatisfied ambition, and that unquenchable thirst for happiness which now tortures mankind. Man's heart, on the contrary, was open to all noble aspirations, to the great thoughts which even now form the best part of our mostly squandered heritage. His soul raised itself naturally without effort to God, manifesting Himself to him. His intelligence was never to know uncertainty or doubt; for he was endowed by God with a superior science, not acquired, but infused. His will was naturally inclined to good. God Himself testified of the other creatures, that had preceded man, that they were good. So was man good, when he came from the hand of God, as the Master of the visible creation; he reflected more than all earthly creatures combined God's infinite perfections. There could be then no stain in him, as other-

wise God's work would not have been perfect. He was, moreover, adopted by God as the heir of His glory, and was therefore innocent and holy. Sanctifying grace now restores only in part that former state of innocence and holiness, because, although it sanctifies, it does not remove from us a strong inclination to evil. How long Adam and Eve persevered in that state of innocence and holiness, Holy Scripture does not mention; we may, however, suppose that a considerable time may have elapsed between their creation and their fall. The seducer must have waited for a propitious moment, which is not likely to have been when man first realized his happiness and felt the workings of an abundance of graces. He probably waited till the highly favored Adam and Eve had grown accustomed to this state of happiness. The dialogue between Eve and the serpent, seems clearly to indicate that they kept the command of God for a considerable time. It is quite certain that the devil was jealous of them, from the very beginning, but it seems sure also that Eve may not have yielded to his seduction at the devil's first visit. As St. Thomas says, Eve knew perfectly well that serpents could not speak, and recognized at once in the voice of the serpent the evil spirit that came to seduce her.

41. *Q. Did God give any command to Adam and Eve?* A. To try their obedience God commanded them not to eat of a certain fruit, which grew in the garden of Paradise.

Our first parents were not created impeccable. As God's power knows no limits, He might have done so. Like the other creatures of the visible world, man might have been bound to unchangeable laws. But such was not the design of God. It required that man should be endowed with liberty; without it, virtue could not exist, fulfilment of duty would merit no reward. Would perfect happiness, such as God designed for man, be possible without it? Could man's homage to God be pleasing to Him, if it did not proceed from a free will? The right use of it would have preserved in man innocence and holiness, as its abuse would cause sin and death. Considering then the fact that man is a mere creature dependent in all things on his Maker, what was more rational than that God should give him a command to enable him to show his obedience to God? God

had placed him in the midst of all earthly enjoyments; to sacrifice one of the many thousands of good things that had been prepared for him, was not difficult and would prove a slight tribute on the part of man to God for His blessings. To try their obedience, God forbade Adam and Eve to eat of the fruit of a certain tree. Scripture tells us that God planted in the midst of Paradise two trees — the tree of life and the tree of knowledge of good and evil. In a footnote of the Douay version of the Bible it is said that the tree of life was so called because it possessed such a quality, that by eating of its fruit, man would have been preserved in a constant state of health, vigor and strength, and would not have died. The tree of knowledge was so called, because to it the deceitful serpent attributed the power of imparting a superior kind of knowledge, a knowledge like unto that of God. These trees resembled other trees, but were of different species. The Cross on which the Saviour died, was of common wood, and yet it is called the tree of salvation, because salvation by faith commenced on the cross. So also were the two trees of Paradise ordinary trees, but the destination which God gave them, made the one the tree of life, and the other the tree of knowledge of good and evil. The fruit of the first was to be in a way the reward for keeping God's command, while the fruit of the other was to be a testimony of disobedience and bring on its condign punishment. If Adam and Eve were punished, it was for disobeying God; the fruit of one tree was in itself not more injurious than that of the other, because all things that God had made were good. It is surprising how all pagan religions have preserved in their sacred books and their traditions the substance of the facts as they are set forth in Holy Scripture.

42. *Q. Which were the chief blessings intended for Adam and Eve, had they remained faithful to God?*

A. The chief blessings intended for Adam and Eve, had they remained faithful to God, were a constant state of happiness in this life and everlasting glory in the next.

The chief blessings intended for Adam and Eve were of a twofold order, natural and supernatural, which must be well distinguished from each other to make clearer the

loss we sustained by the fall of our first parents. Natural blessings were such as were given by God to make man what his nature demanded, as reason, free will, etc. The constant state of happiness in this world also belonged to the natural order; it was a free gift of God. The supernatural gifts of God bestowed on man at his creation were: his spiritual adoption by God through sanctifying grace, which enabled him to perform works of a supernatural order, entitling him to heavenly joys and glory. Man is not by nature the child of God, but His creature, His servant, because he is not naturally born of God and has not God's nature. But God adopted Adam and Eve as His children, that is, He made them heirs of His heavenly kingdom. To make this clearer, let us consider the whole world as a royal palace of God; in this palace man would be by his nature only a servant, a slave. He is in no way the son of the King, and has therefore no right to sit on His throne, to be a partaker of His property, nor to inherit His kingdom. But God in His mercy, without any rights or claims on the part of man, adopted him as His son and gave him a right to share His goods with Him. In the second place, there were other gifts, which, although not surpassing all created nature, were supernatural to man, because they exceeded human nature. Man is, by his very nature, mortal; but God made him immortal. Man is, by his nature, ignorant and acquires his knowledge with difficulty; but God gave him in the beginning a superhuman science. Man is, by his nature, subject to the temptations of the flesh; God took from him all evil concupiscence. Man was naturally subject to numerous trials, misfortunes and sorrows; but God placed him in the earthly Paradise, where he was free from all such evils. These four gifts naturally belong to the angels only; when granted to man, they raised him to the dignity of the angels. All these gifts and blessings Adam and Eve received, not for themselves only, but for all their posterity, under one condition, that they would prove their obedience to God. Man was, therefore, in the plans of God's Providence, designed to be a happy being, enjoying upon earth as much happiness as was consistent with his human nature; and this happiness was to be infinitely increased by his translation to the other world, where he would enjoy God Himself in everlasting glory.

43. *Q. Did Adam and Eve remain faithful to God?* A. Adam and Eve did not remain faithful to God; but broke His command by eating the forbidden fruit.

St. Augustine and St. Thomas refute in their writings a very common error about the character of the original guilt. It is generally supposed that if Adam and Eve had remained faithful, the primitive happiness would have been assured to all their posterity. This is an exaggeration. The fidelity of our first parents would not have had that absolute effect. Every one of their descendants would have been subject to trial, and have had to obey the same command and keep the law of nature. The command given to the first couple was for the whole human race which they represented. Had they kept it, some of their descendants might have violated it; because like Adam and Eve, they were not confirmed in grace. The sin of Adam and Eve extended its results upon the whole human race, of which they were the first parents. After Adam and Eve had enjoyed for some time their exceedingly great happiness, they fell victims to the temptations of the devil. The seducer was too cunning to try to induce at once Adam and Eve to break the command of God, as their eyes would probably have been opened, before falling into his snare. Eve thought herself strong enough to argue with the devil. The devil began by exciting her curiosity, and asked her why God had forbidden her to eat of that kind of fruit. Eve acknowledged the facts and the results that would follow her disobedience. The evil one then openly denied that the threats of the Almighty would be carried out. Eve in the mean time remained in the proximate occasion of sin, by gazing at the fruit which seemed good to eat, and fair to her eyes and delightful to behold. Having yielded thus far, there was only one step more needed for her to consent fully to the temptation; she took of the fruit and did eat. As Adam, however, was the head of the human family, the same evil consequences would not have befallen the human race, had he remained faithful to God. But faithful to his wife even unto crime, says St. Augustine, Adam took from her hand the forbidden fruit, and ate of it. Since Eve had not fallen dead at the foot of the tree, struck by the hand of God, Adam seemed to have doubted His word. The

example and solicitation of his wife determined Adam's fall. Soon after their fall they heard the voice of God. They had, in the mean time hidden themselves. God required a confession of their guilt from both Adam and Eve, before passing judgment upon them. Both endeavored to shift the blame from themselves; the woman blamed the serpent, and Adam blamed the woman, whom God had given him for a helpmate. All parties to the prevarication are punished, but not more rigorously than they had deserved. On considering God's kindness towards our first parents, reason itself would tell us that there was no punishment too severe for them. Their sin was of the same nature as that of the fallen angels; a difference is made in the punishment. The angels had received more grace and light; their sin was more wilful and they were cast into hell without a moment for repentance. The just punishment of Adam and Eve was commuted into lifelong sufferings and crosses. And all that for one single mortal sin!

44. *Q. What befell Adam and Eve on account of their sin?*

A. Adam and Eve on account of their sin lost innocence and holiness, and were doomed to sickness and death.

Besides the special punishments inflicted on Adam and Eve, they both received general punishments. To the woman God said: "I will multiply thy sorrows and thy conceptions; in sorrow shalt thou bring forth children, and thou shalt be under thy husband's power and he shall have dominion over thee." (Gen. iii, 16.) God said to Adam: "Because thou hast hearkened to the voice of thy wife and hast eaten of the tree, whereof I commanded that thou shouldst not eat, cursed is the earth in thy work; with labor and toil shalt it bring forth to thee. In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread." (Ibid. 17–19.) In addition to these special punishments, they lost, by their sin, innocence and holiness. Having lost sanctifying grace, their souls were no longer pleasing in the sight of God. With it they lost their spiritual adoption; they had no further right to everlasting glory in the other world. They were expelled from the earthly Paradise, since they were excluded from God's friendship. God had made man im-

mortal, but this supernatural gift was also lost by sin. To this may be objected that, although God threatened Adam with death the very day he would eat of the forbidden fruit, this threat was not carried out, because Adam did not die that day. St. Augustine replies that that same day he brought upon himself the necessity of death and incurred the debt of it, on that day he began really to die, because he received the germ of death, which would, in the course of time, sever the union of body and soul. His intelligence was not taken from him, but sin had made it more laborious for him to acquire knowledge. Free will was not lost by sin, as most heresiarchs would have it; Adam remained a free being even after the fall, and was not a mere machine, irresponsible for its acts. But his will had received a terrible blow; it was no longer now naturally inclined to good, it was subject to the temptations of the flesh; the continual warfare now began between the flesh and the spirit. Numerous trials, sorrows, sickness and other evils were to follow as precursors of the last great trial, death. "By sin death came into the world," says St. Paul; had Adam, therefore, not sinned, he never would, in all probability, have died; he would have been transferred from the earthly Paradise to the heavenly Sion; or should he have died, death would not have been a punishment to him.

45. *Q. What evil befell us on account of the disobedience of our first parents?*

A. On account of the disobedience of our first parents, we all share in their sin and punishment, as we would have shared in their happiness, if they had remained faithful.

As there have been heretics that denied every other dogma of our faith, so there have been also some that denied that the sin of Adam had any evil consequences for us. Death, they maintained was not a punishment of sin, but merely a natural event. Pelagius played the hypocrite, at one time condemning those who held that the sin of Adam had not injured his posterity and that children are born innocent as Adam was before his fall. Afterwards to gratify his followers he recanted, and explained that all the harm Adam's sin had brought upon us was the influence of bad example. This heresy has its

adherents among nearly all denominations dissenting from the Catholic Church. The Catholic Church alone practically claims that Baptism is necessary in all cases to blot out the guilt of Adam's sin, in which we all share. Among non-Catholics generally Baptism is not considered indispensable, because they have no clear conception of the consequences of original sin. And yet there can be no reasonable doubt that in Adam we have all sinned, and that we all share in his punishment. We need only quote one text from St. Paul to corroborate this: "Wherefore as by one man sin entered into this world and by sin death, and so death passed upon all men, in whom all have sinned" (Rom. v, 12). By one man, and that was the first man Adam, sin entered; his was the first sin committed by man; death followed as a punishment of sin; death passed upon all men, because in Adam they had all sinned, and sin was to have its punishment. According to this testimony of St. Paul nothing can be clearer than that we all shared in Adam's sin and punishment. Many other texts of Scripture prove this evidently. It was the common belief of Christendom, before the heresy of Pelagius appeared, as the writings of the Holy Fathers, who lived before that time, clearly show. Various proofs from other sources can be adduced to show that the Church of God has always held and taught this dogma of faith. We have alluded already to the necessity of Baptism for children. The Church has always baptized them, because she knew that "except one be born again of water and the Holy Ghost, he cannot enter the kingdom of God" (John iii, 5). Why cannot children who are not baptized enter the kingdom of heaven, if not on account of original sin? Children before attaining the use of reason cannot be guilty of actual sins, and yet they are excluded from heaven if not baptized. Baptism removes, blots out sin; for it is the sacrament of regeneration. Exorcisms and breathing on the face of the one to be baptized, have always formed part of the ceremonial of Baptism; why should the evil spirit be commanded to depart from little children before Baptism, were they not his slaves through original sin? Death is a punishment for all, even for little children. St. Paul tells us that Christ suffered and died for all, hence also for little children, because through the merits of His death, Baptism would have the efficacy of wiping out original

sin from their souls. There is then not the slightest doubt that we share in Adam's sin and punishment. His happiness would have been ours, had he remained faithful, provided, however, if the opinion of Sts. Thomas and Augustine be not correct, our lineal ancestors had not broken the commandment, which would have been given them.

46. *Q. What other effects followed from the sin of our first parents?*

A. Our nature was corrupted by the sin of our first parents, which darkened our understanding, weakened our will and left in us a strong inclination to evil.

The sin of Adam was the first disturbance of the order which God had established on earth. In the intentions of God, man's rational soul and material body would coöperate in harmony in attaining his final end. The soul was to be the queen; her orders would be naturally carried out by the body. There would be no warfare between them, as the interests of both would be identical. Man was created in the image of God, and he naturally tended to his Maker. But Adam's sin has changed this and the human nature has been corrupted. Perfect harmony no longer exists between body and soul. The body is no longer the docile servant of the soul, prepared to follow always her dictates; constant struggle is necessary for those that will enter the kingdom of heaven. Human nature is not so corrupt as to be unable to do right. The Saints have shown us that our body can be made to harmonize with the spirit, as God intended it to do. They were not, however, as Adam would have been, naturally inclined to be good and virtuous; they had to subdue the body just as we have, and by serious and continuous efforts to undo, with the help of God's grace, the evil consequences of the first sin, in order to bring about in themselves a state somewhat resembling human nature before sin. In the animal kingdom we notice an inborn tendency to live up to their nature, and the natural instinct that enables in a short time the young to act like their parents. But of all beings man is the most helpless on his entrance into life. There is no creature more in need of help and guidance than a new born infant in all that regards both his body and his soul. Although possessed of a rational soul and endowed with understanding and will; an infant

cannot yet make use of these faculties; and its progress in learning to use them and to acquire knowledge is exceedingly slow. Is it reasonable to suppose that this is man's natural state, as God had intended? Man is the masterpiece of the visible creation. Whence this dark ignorance, if not as a consequence, a punishment of the first sin? This sin has weakened our will, so that it is more liable to choose and act contrary to its best interest. This weakness is a consequence of the darkness of the understanding. Man's will, however, has not become a mere machine through sin or a something devoid of freedom, that must necessarily submit to other agencies, as many heretics would have us believe. Man's will is still free, and as before, able to make its own choice. God has given man free will, and has not willed that one of the consequences of original sin should be the loss of that freedom. But man's will has been weakened and is now more inclined to make a wrong selection. It is not now the strong will which shrinks from no obstacles in the pursuit of real happiness; for it is too easily influenced and led astray by the cravings of the body, which are opposed to the soul's real interests. We experience in us, besides, a strong inclination to evil. We notice this even in little children, who, when not carefully watched, almost naturally do that which is wrong. The cause of Adam's sin was pride; the weakness of will and inclination to evil in his posterity should inspire them with humility. St. Paul claims that the sting of the flesh, angel of Satan, was given him, lest the greatness of his revelations should puff him up. We are too weak to depend upon ourselves, unable of ourselves to do anything meritorious for life eternal, unable to resist all the temptations, with which we are assailed, without the grace of God; this should naturally lead us to a poor opinion of ourselves, but not to total diffidence, because, like St. Paul, we can do all in Him who strengthens us, not we alone, but the grace of God with us.

47. *Q. What is the sin which we inherit from our first parents?*

A. The sin which we inherit from our first parents is called original sin.

Original sin is generally said to be the sin of our first parents, although it is most probably the sin of Adam only.

This is clear from the teaching of St. Paul. By one man sin entered into the world, and so in Adam all die; so also in Christ all shall be made alive. Had Eve alone yielded to the temptation of the evil one, neither sin nor death would have fallen to the lot of her children. From what we have said in explanation of the preceding question, it is clear not only that we are all born sinners, but also that we have sinned. "All have sinned," says St. Paul, "and need the glory of God" (Rom. iii, 23). But it is also sure that none of us sinned by our own will before we were born, and therefore, as we have sinned, we must have sinned through the will of another, viz, Adam; if his will had not been to a certain extent the will of human nature, and consequently ours, it could not be said that we had sinned at all. The Catholic Church teaches us that in a newly born infant, there is the guilt of a sin, and this could certainly not be imputed to it, unless it proceeded from a free action in which it shared. Sin, to be such, must proceed from a free will. A man deprived of the use of reason cannot commit sin, because he has no free will. If then we have original sin in us when we are born, it must be that we have sinned in or with Adam. We could not prevent our being born as we were; this fact alone, as it is unwilful on our part, could not make sin imputable to us, since mortal sin must necessarily proceed from a free deliberate will. It cannot be argued that sin in little children is wilful by an habitual act of the will, because they do not will the contrary and that, therefore, theirs is a true sin without any regard to the sin of Adam. Their inability of willing the contrary cannot be sinful. We are born with the guilt of original sin; this sin, to be a sin, must be wilful in some way, for no other can be made to explain satisfactorily the share we had in the sin of Adam; therefore we must admit that the will of Adam was our will, and that we truly sinned in him, as St. Paul says. This sin properly consists in the privation of original justice. This privation implies the following consequences resulting from that sin, such as, the guilt of sin, the unworthiness of receiving grace and the deserving of punishment, the guilt of punishment due for sin, the enmity of Him who was offended by sin, dispositions or habits contrary to the habits of virtue infused with original justice, a disinclination in the will to do good,

privation of grace or of justice infused by God, a stain in the soul resulting from the privation of divine beauty and light in our soul. All these sad effects tend to give us an idea of their cause, original sin.

48. *Q. Why is this sin called original?*

A. This sin is called original, because it comes down to us from our first parents, and we are brought into the world with its guilt on our soul.

The Catechism gives two reasons why the sin of Adam, as it is in us, is called original, first, because it comes down to us from the origin, the beginning of the human race, from Adam, and secondly, because its guilt is on our soul from our origin, from our conception. Speaking of original sin, St. Augustine used to say: "Nothing is a better subject for preaching and nothing is harder to understand." We have clearly proved from Scripture that the sin of Adam is the sin of us all; but how it is that we are brought into the world with its guilt in our souls, is not so clear. Formerly there were some who taught that our souls proceeded from the souls of our parents, and they explained the transmission of original sin, from the supposition that the first man's soul having been stained with sin, the souls of his descendants coming from his, must necessarily have been also stained with it. This view is evidently absurd, for every human soul is called into existence by the direct action of God's omnipotence, by creation. Others hold, and not without reason, that original sin is transmitted in virtue of an explicit covenant, or a decree of God, whereby men are brought into this world in the ordinary way of generation deprived of grace. Others again explain it differently. As our parents are unable to give us sanctifying grace, the fact that they are regenerated does not prevent us from being brought into this world contaminated with sin. Our parents are not the authors of the spiritual life in us. St. Thomas beautifully explains the transmission of original sin in the following words: "All men who are born from Adam, may be considered as one man, because they are of the same nature, which they have received from the first parent. The many men so descended from Adam, are as many members of one body: now the act of a member in the body does not proceed from the will of that

member, but from the will of the soul which first moves that member or causes it to act. So also the disorder existing in a man born of Adam, is not wilful by his individual will, but by the will of the first parent, from whom he proceeds. Hence the sin which is transmitted from Adam to his descendants, is called original, just as the sin which is derived from the soul on the members of the body is called actual. And as actual sin committed by one member of the body, is not the sin of that member, but inasmuch as that member is the member of the man, it is called a human sin, so also is original sin not the sin of the individual man, but inasmuch as he received human nature from the first parent, it is also called a sin of human nature according to the words of the Apostle: "We were by nature children of wrath." (Eph. ii, 3.) Often the more we try to explain original sin, the more obscure it appears to us. Let us believe, without trying to fathom this mystery.

49. *Q. Does this corruption of our nature remain in us, after original sin is forgiven?*

A. This corruption of our nature and other punishments remain in us, after original sin is forgiven.

Baptism is the Sacrament which cleanses our souls from original sin. It takes away all the guilt of sin; by means of sanctifying grace, which it imparts, our souls from enemies of God and slaves of Satan become the children of God and pleasing in His sight, and all eternal punishment due to it is remitted. There remain, however, the corruption of our nature, the sting of sin and temporal punishments or corporal miseries. This corruption or concupiscence, is not sin, in itself, nor does it compel us to sin. St. James (i, 4) teaches that every man is tempted by his own concupiscence, being drawn away and allured thereby. There remains in us that proneness to evil, which is so noticeable even among the little children, when left to themselves. The physical deterioration of our nature is not amended by Baptism, nor are we thereby restored to the happy state of Adam before his fall. Our will remains inclined to evil, our intellect shrouded in darkness. We said that punishment due for original sin is taken away by Baptism, and yet that punishment or corporal miseries remain, to express different sorts of punishments. The

proper punishment is that evil imposed on us in atonement for our sins. Punishment may again be the compensation of an injury, or a safeguard against future sins. Besides these there are other punishments, that is, natural defects, or ills that afflict us, which have indeed their origin in sin, but are not borne in atonement for our own sins. Such were the punishments, which the Blessed Virgin, St. John Baptist and others suffered, not as debts for sin, but for their greater sanctification. It was not the sin of the blind man in the Gospel, nor that of his parents, that brought about his blindness, as Christ Himself testified. (John ix, 3.) The effects of original sin are all so many punishments for those who have not been regenerated by Baptism. For those who have been baptized the consequences of original sin are not properly vindictive punishments due for sin, because the punishment had been remitted with the sin; they may become, however, punishments for actual sins. When we say that Baptism does not take away all the penalties due for original sin, we do not mean to say that Baptism does not contain the power to produce that effect, but that God suspends that effect until the day of the general resurrection. According to its divine institution the grace conferred in Baptism properly requires immunity from all these penalties, and Baptism would have taken them immediately away, had not God deemed it for our best interests to leave in us the consequences of original sin in this life. To him who would further inquire why it is so, the Council of Trent replies, that these penalties are left to us, that we may contend with them; they cannot hurt us, not even concupiscence, for if we resist it aided with the grace of God, it will, on the contrary, make our crown the brighter for having striven lawfully.

50. *Q. Was any one ever preserved from original sin?* A. The Blessed Virgin Mary, through the merits of her Divine Son, was preserved free from the guilt of original sin, and this privilege is called her Immaculate Conception.

The Prophet Jeremiah and St. John the Baptist were sanctified before their birth, but some time after their conception; the Blessed Virgin was by a special privilege preserved Immaculate, that is, free from the stain of original

sin from the first moment of her Conception. At the very instant in which her soul was created and infused into her body, she was preserved from contracting the stain of original sin, by having sanctifying grace bestowed upon her in the very first moment of her existence, and this through the merits of her Divine Son. The soul of the Blessed Virgin was of itself liable to contract the stain of original sin, like any child of Adam, but in view and through the merits of Jesus Christ, whose Virgin Mother she was to be, and in whose favor some other general laws were suspended, she was, by exception, preserved from this stain. Nothing seems to be more logical than the admission of this dogma. All Christians grant that God, if He so wished, *could* preserve the Blessed Virgin Immaculate; and most of them see that the honor of the Son demands that His Mother should never have been defiled by sin, nor ever have been the slave of the devil, or *even for an instant* an object of hatred or displeasure to God. The Christian mind shudders at the thought that she, who was to be the living Temple of the Word Incarnate, should have been permitted by God, who could prevent it, to have been previously the abode of the devil. What all Christians must think possible, reasonable, and strongly demanded by the honor of Christ, Catholics hold as an article of faith. It is true that Pius IX proclaimed this as a dogma of faith on the 8th of December, 1854, but from this proclamation we should not infer that it had not been previously believed by the Church. The Pope simply proclaimed that what had until then been the pious belief of the Church from the beginning, was henceforth to be believed as an article of faith. Different opinions had been allowed until then, while the great preponderating mass of Christians had always believed in the Immaculate Conception. Proofs from Scripture, the almost unanimous consent of the Fathers had made it an undoubted fact, till a controversy arose concerning it in the twelfth century. Even putting these evidences aside, the shocking consequences, which the contrary doctrine implies, would in themselves justify our belief. The first of these consequences would be that He who is holiness itself and has an infinite horror of sin, took human nature from a corrupt sinful human source, whilst He might have taken it from one incorrupt and holy. The second, that the infinite Purity was enshrined in the Ark of the maternity which had

been contaminated by original sin, whilst He might have avoided it. The third, that the Divine Person drew the Precious Blood of His Humanity from a source, which had not been immaculate from the beginning, whilst He might have preserved it immaculate and thereby enhanced the glory of His Redemption. Since it was in His power to preserve His Mother immaculate, who can believe that He did not do so? Since it was in His power to prepare a spotless temple wherein the Incarnate Word should dwell for nine months, who can believe that He selected one that had first been stained with original sin? Who can believe that God selected for Mother one who had once been in the power and slavery of Satan? Christian sense grounded on theological reasons sees at once that God's Mother, through the merits of her Son, must have been preserved from the guilt of original sin.

LESSON SIXTH

ON SIN AND ITS KINDS

51. *Q. Is original sin the only kind of sin?*
A. Original sin is not the only kind of sin; there is another kind of sin which we commit ourselves, called actual sin.

Original sin is the sin which we have contracted from our first parents; we have sinned with them by their will; what is original sin for us was actual sin for Adam; his own will led astray by Satan, committed it. We have seen in the preceding pages the evil consequences of that sin for us. Our will is not what Adam's will was; our nature has been corrupted, there is now in us a strong inclination to evil; our will is still free. If then Adam sinned, it is quite natural that others would follow his example; not that there is any necessity for sin, or that man necessarily sins, but because man is liable to abuse his liberty, and, as a matter of fact, has frequently abused it. This seems too plain to need any explanation. And yet there have been heretics who denied that man could sin, or that sin is imputable to him. Those who pretend that man's free will was lost by the sin of Adam, must, to be consistent, hold that there is no such a thing as actual sin, because, if man is a mere machine, whose works are set into motion by a higher cause, what he does cannot be sinful, because they are not his acts. If a man shoots another, it is not the bullet that commits the sin, but the man who fires it. In the same way, if we have no free will, it is another cause that determines and impels us, and is responsible for the act. It is still more unreasonable to hold that we are not accountable for the sins we commit; because sin is a transgression of God's law, and He cannot be indifferent to the keeping or the transgression of His law. Even if there were no everlasting hell as a punishment of sin, even if God had not come upon earth to atone for sin, yet our reason alone

would tell us that the law, which God has written in the heart of man, is not always obeyed; this brings about the disorder, man's revolt against the will of Him, who has a strict right to command, the abuse of our freedom; and this constitutes sin.

52. *Q. What is actual sin?*

A. Actual sin is any wilful thought, word, deed or omission contrary to the law of God.

A transgression of God's law, to be sinful, must be wilful; however grievous an act would be against the law, if there is no coöperation of the will, there is no sin. An act, to be sinful, must be at least a human act. Intelligence, will and liberty are necessary to make an act human. If any of these is wanting, there is no human act. During sleep a great many acts are performed by the human system which are not human acts, because one or all of these conditions are wanting. We have seen in the preceding question, that man must be free to be guilty of sin. To be wilful, an act must proceed from the will with the intellectual knowledge of the object, or of the end. We cannot wish or will what we do not know; the intellect determines the will into action. Before willing a sinful action, the intellect proposes the action as such. It is, besides, necessary that the intellect manifest to the will the sinfulness of the act at the time the will performs it. It is absurd to say that a man sins, when he does not reflect or know, at least in a confused way, the sinfulness of the act. Holy Scripture tells us of Noah getting drunk, because he did not know the strength of the wine, which he had made. He had not the remotest idea that his drinking of the juice of the vine would have effects contrary to the law of God; therefore neither his drunkenness nor the acts following it were wilful, and could not be sinful. This does of course not excuse those who are wilfully ignorant, who are afraid of knowing the truth, and take all possible precautions not to know it; wilful ignorance of the law is a trangression of the law, because it is our duty to know it.

Thoughts, words, deeds and omissions may be equally against the law of God. Thoughts include all internal sins, which may be divided into three different kinds: 1st, The free pleasure we take in a forbidden object represented by our imagination as present without actual de-

sires. 2nd, The deliberate pleasure we take in a forbidden object or act of the past. 3rd, The desire or act of the will, whereby we wish for a forbidden object. "Thou shalt not covet," said the Lord, thereby forbidding these internal sins just as well as the external; they are opposed to sound reason, for it must be unlawful to desire what it is not lawful to have or to do. Many internal sins are of the same specific malice as the external act, as Christ Himself teaches us. (Mat. v, 28.) Words are the expressions of our thoughts; and when they are used to express our evil thoughts, they are, of course, forbidden and sinful, because they would, by their very nature, bring to others the evil thoughts or desires which they express. The deed, or the external action, does not of itself increase or lessen the morality of the internal, because a good or bad act is made so by the will being comformable or opposed to God's law. So we read in Scripture that reward or punishment awaits us according to the disposition of the will, and that often the will is taken for the deed. So was Abraham rewarded for having been ready to sacrifice his son, although he had not actually done it. The punishment for adulterers awaits even those who commit the sin only in thought. Generally, however, the external act increases the morality of the internal act, or makes the internal act better or worse according to the edification or the scandal that may be given thereby to others. As certain thoughts, words and deeds are forbidden, so others are commanded, and the omission of these is, indeed, a transgression of the law. God forbids us in the first commandment to worship idols; worshipping them is a sin; but the same commandment requires us to worship God; to omit worshipping God is a sin also. Any wilful act contrary to the law of God, either commanding or forbidding, constitutes actual sin.

53. *Q. How many kinds of actual sin are there?*
A. There are two kinds of actual sin, mortal and venial.

It is sure that not all sins are alike, and that some are more grievous than others. Jeremiah said of the Israelites of his day, that they had done worse than their fathers. (vii, 26.) Christ, alluding to Judas, said to Pilate: "He that hath delivered Me to thee, hath the *greater* sin."

(John xix, 11.) Reason itself tells us that there must be a difference. Our offenses against God are, in proportion to the person offended, what the offenses of children are against their parents, or of subjects against their rulers. As there is a difference in these, and as a harsh word to our parents is not so great a crime as the murder of them, so also there is a difference in our offenses against God. Sins are opposed to the virtues and commandments, but there are virtues more excellent than others, commandments more binding than others; therefore their transgression is more or less grievous. Besides the intention inspiring a certain act may be worse than the intention inspiring another. There are different sources whereby the gravity of sin can be determined. The Catechism teaches that there are two kinds of sin, mortal and venial; as of the diseases of the body some mean sure death, whilst others will easily yield to treatment, so also some sins cause the spiritual death of the soul, whilst others bring on it only a spiritual weakness that is more or less easily curable. Scripture clearly shows us the difference between various sins. It explicitly asserts that many will be rejected by God for their sins, and be sentenced to eternal punishment. The so-called reformers of the sixteenth century, in open defiance to God's word, tried to do away with all sins except one; infidelity. Believe, said Martin Luther, and murder and adultery will not hurt you. "Do not err," says St. Paul, "neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor the effeminate, nor liers with mankind, nor thieves, nor the covetous, nor drunkards, nor extortioners shall possess the kingdom of heaven." (I Cor. vi, 9.) This is different Theology from that taught by Martin Luther. The sins spoken of as worthy of death are mortal sins. Scripture clearly shows that there are other sins which we call venial. It is said that "a just man shall fall seven times and shall rise again." (Prov. xxiv, 16.) He who sins and yet remains a just man does not sin mortally, since he does not lose justice, therefore, he commits only venial sins. "In many things we all offend," says St. James (iii, 2); but we do not all offend God by mortal sin, whereas Scripture testifies that there are many just men before God; therefore there are just men not altogether free from sin; consequently, their sins are merely venial. As there are minor offenses or frictions among friends, which do not break up friend-

ship altogether; so also there are minor offenses against God, which do not deprive altogether of His friendship.

54. *Q. What is mortal sin?*

A. Mortal sin is a grievous offense against the law of God.

Mortal sin is the greatest of evils. It is in itself so hideous and detestable, that, even were there no hell to punish it, it ought to be shunned on account of its own innate malice. The grievousness of an offense is measured by the dignity of the person offended, by the claims which he has upon the offender's love and service. Applying this principle, it follows that mortal sin, which is a grievous offense against God, who is infinitely exalted above the highest of His creatures, and whose claim to our love infinitely surpasses all other claims, is an offense incomparably greater than that against any creature whatever, and implies an infinite malice. The intrinsic malice of mortal sin consists in that the sinner, by committing it, "recedes altogether from God and turns entirely to the creature" (St. Aug.). There is nothing in creation in so direct opposition to God and His infinite perfections as mortal sin. God is goodness itself, mortal sin is the absence of all good; God is essential order, mortal sin is thorough disorder; God is the supreme good; sin is utter evil and corruption; God is essential beauty, mortal sin is monstrous deformity; God is diffusive love, mortal sin is narrow, despicable selfishness; God is essential wisdom, mortal sin is blind madness; God is justice and holiness, mortal sin is injustice and wickedness; God is everlasting life, mortal sin is everlasting death; God is unfading glory, mortal sin is endless shame. Mortal sin is a desertion, and abandonment of God; it is the greatest of disorders, for it prefers the creature to God. It is an open revolt, a rebellion against God; it endeavors to pull God down from His throne, and to place on it Satan, His mortal enemy. It is a base contempt of God, of His authority and of His friendship. It is an audacious insult which man, who is dust and ashes, offers to the Being who is infinitely great, infinitely powerful, infinite in all His perfections. It is the blackest ingratitude of man against his greatest Benefactor. It is really giving the preference above God to a vile, shameful passion, to a base, transitory pleasure. Mortal sin is a

direct outrage offered to God; it outrages Him as Creator, by revolting against His supreme dominion; as Legislator, by violating His laws; as Redeemer, by despising His grace; as Friend, by provoking His enmity; as Father, by resisting His living authority; as King, by banishing Him from the possession of his heart. By mortal sin man outrages in a special manner each of the three Divine Persons — the Father, whose adopted sonship he renounces; the Son, whom, according to St. Paul, he crucifies again; the Holy Ghost, whom he grieves and resists. Offending against the law of God is offending God Himself. For the law of God is the intelligence and will of God as manifested to man. No language can adequately express the intrinsic malice of mortal sin; no human words can convey a perfect idea of an infinite offense. Mortal sin viewed in itself, were it not eternally punished in hell, shows clearly that it is the greatest of evils, and to man, next to being lost eternally in hell, the greatest of misfortunes.

55. *Q. Why is this sin called mortal?*

A. This sin is called mortal, because it deprives us of spiritual life, which is sanctifying grace, and brings everlasting death and damnation to the soul.

The grievous and sinful offense which we have described in the preceding answer is called mortal or deadly, because it brings a twofold death on the soul, spiritual death here below, and the punishment of everlasting death in the world to come. Mortal sin gives the death-blow to the soul, by causing it to lose sanctifying grace. God is the spiritual life of the soul, as the soul is the life of the body, and as the body dies as soon as the soul leaves it, so does the soul die spiritually or supernaturally, when God leaves it. Mortal sin effects this separation; it causes the soul to lose sanctifying grace, that is, the grace which made it before pleasing in the sight of God; it causes it to forfeit the friendship of God, who now looks down upon it as an object of abomination and horror, and departs from it. Mortal sin deprives the soul of Him who was its life. A sinner is, therefore, a murderer; he kills himself by offending the Almighty. By taking the spiritual life of the soul, sin covers it with a loathsome, deadly leprosy. It brings about in the soul a change like that of Lucifer and his

fallen angels, who, from bright spirits, were transformed into monstrous demons. With the loss of sanctifying grace is connected the destruction of all acquired merits. It, moreover, deprives the soul of all power of gaining further merit. All the works, however good in themselves, performed in that state, are devoid of supernatural merit. In addition to spiritual death, it brings on the soul everlasting death and damnation. This is its condign punishment. Every mortal sin deserves in itself to be punished even as the first mortal sin committed by the angels was punished. Not a moment was given them for repentance. If now every sinner is not hurled into hell the very moment he commits sin, it is not that his crime is not heinous enough to be so punished, but that God shows, when He pleases, His mercy towards the sinner; He gives him, not necessarily, whenever He deems fit, time to retrace his steps and return, like the prodigal son, to his father. It would be but an act of justice, if God were to pronounce on the sinner, the very moment his sin is committed, the terrible sentence which He will pronounce on the wicked on the last day: "Depart from Me, ye cursed into everlasting fire." These terrible consequences of mortal sin ought to inspire us with a salutary horror of it. "Flee from sins as from the face of a serpent" says the wise man (Eccli. xxi, 2). If you don't flee from it, or kill it, it will kill you.

56. *Q. How many things are necessary to make a sin mortal?*

A. To make a sin mortal three things are necessary: a grievous matter, sufficient reflection and full consent of the will.

Considering that mortal sin is the worst of evils, that by it man makes himself deserving of everlasting death, that God desires to save all men, that His burden is light and His yoke sweet, it ought to be easy for man to avoid mortal sin, and that certain conditions be combined to bring about such a disorder in man. The first of these conditions is a grievous matter, either in itself or in the circumstances that surround it. The reason of this is that a small matter does not impose a grave obligation, and when the obligation is not great, the transgression cannot be great either. Hence telling a simple lie is not in itself a grievous matter; but when the lie causes a great damage to others,

it becomes a grievous matter. Stealing a cent is a sin, but the matter stolen is not sufficient to constitute a mortal sin. To know what is grievous matter and what is not, we should have recourse, first to Holy Scripture, because the matter that constitutes mortal sin should be weighed not by human, but by divine judgment. Sins that are said to make the sinner deserving of death, or to exclude him from the kingdom of heaven, are mortal sins. Secondly, as the Church is the ground and pillar of truth, her teaching in regard to morals must be infallible; a matter which she considers grievous, must be such in the sight of God. Thirdly, the unanimous consent of the Fathers and of the Theologians is of the greatest weight in determining the grievousness of matter, because God has given them to the Church to enlighten others in the way of truth. When none of these sources furnish clear evidence of the grievousness of matter, it is not easy to determine what we are not positively sure of. The second condition required for a mortal sin is sufficient reflection as to the grievous malice of the sinful act. There would be sufficient reflection, if, after examining, a serious doubt as to the lawfulness of the act, our reason would infer the grievous malice of the act. It would not be necessary that we interiorly argue for any length of time with ourselves as to its mortal malice; an instant may be sufficient. A man deprived of the use of reason may perform a mortally criminal action, and yet not commit a mortal sin, because his act is not a human act, as he cannot deliberate with himself on its malice. Whatever occurs when we are temporarily deprived of the use of our reason, is not sinful for the same reason; unless we wilfully do a thing that we know by experience will lead to a certain sinful effect. The third condition is full consent of the will; because by mortal sin man abandons God and clings to the creature, and this cannot be except he prefers the object of sin to God, and so places his ultimate happiness in a creature. It seems to be inconsistent with divine goodness to sentence a man to the eternal torments of hell, either for a light transgression or for an act that is not altogether free and wilful. It is not necessary that we foresee all the consequences of sin. Adam and Eve did not probably foresee them, and yet they committed a mortal sin. When these three conditions are present, mortal sin is consummated, and if immediately after that we were to feel the con-

sequences of it, we could blame only ourselves, because we brought them deliberately upon ourselves.

57. *Q. What is venial sin?*

A. Venial sin is a slight offense against the laws of God in matters of less importance; or in matters of great importance it is an offense committed without sufficient reflexion or full consent of the will.

The difference between mortal and venial sin is so great, that venial sins however multiplied can never constitute a mortal sin. A mortal sin is an evil to which no other can be compared. The essential difference between the two consists in this, that by mortal sin man totally recedes or falls away from God, his last end, to turn, or to attach himself to creatures and seek in them his final happiness; whilst by venial sin man does not recede from God, but commits an inordinate act that can in no way be referred to God. Whenever an act contrary to the law of God does not fulfil the three conditions of a mortal sin, it is only a venial sin. A sin which would be mortal in its kind, or species, is only a venial sin, first, when there is no grievous matter. So would the theft of a few cents, although deliberately committed, be only a venial sin, because there is no grievous matter. Secondly, there would be no mortal sin in a grievous matter if the act is not deliberately committed; thus, for instance, if a man, in a sudden fit of anger, would seriously hurt another, his sin would not be mortal, because his sudden anger would momentarily deprive him of the use of his reason and his act would not be deliberate. Thirdly, a mortal sin becomes venial, when there is no full consent of the will. When the second condition is absent, the third must necessarily be absent also. So a child that has not sufficient use of its reason cannot give a full or deliberate consent of his will; hence his act however criminal in itself, cannot be a mortal sin. What is a mortal sin in itself, may be only a venial sin for one who has an erroneous conscience, but is in good faith, or *bona fide,* or who from *invincible error* thinks it to be merely a venial sin. An erroneous conscience may also *vice versa* of a venial sin make a mortal sin. A venial sin is called venial from a Latin word which signifies pardon, because God forgives it easily in this world, considering our human frailty, and does not punish it in the next world with eternal

torments. "There are sins" says the Lord, "which shall not be forgiven either in this world or in the next;" There must then be sins, which are forgiven in the next world, and these are venial sins, for mortal sins are punished in hell, out of which there is no redemption.

58. *Q. Which are the effects of venial sin?*

A. The effects of venial sin are the lessening of the love of God in our heart, the making us less worthy of His help, and the weakening of the power to resist mortal sin.

The first effect of venial sin is the lessening of the love of God in our heart. Venial sin must necessarily decrease our love of God, and a disposition to it almost extinguish it; the habit of venial sin is, in some manner, more dangerous than mortal sin, which every good Christian hates and dreads and tries to get rid of, if he happens to commit it; whilst but few dread the habit of venial sin, because they are light sins; and yet such a habit leads one gradually and almost imperceptibly to mortal sin; hence God, in the Apocalypse, goes so far as to say that He will reject, nay, "vomit out of His mouth" those who have the habit of committing venial sin. The love of God in one who habitually yields to venial sin, is an indifferent, unfaithful love. It is the love of a child, that would not murder its mother, because it is afraid that this might cost its life, but does not desist from grieving and afflicting her in all possible ways, because it knows that its mother is kind and merciful. As long as it is only fear that prevents it from doing greater harm to its mother, its love for its mother hardly deserves the name. When we are disposed to avoid mortal sin only on account of the punishment that follows it, and are not disposed to avoid venial sin, it is clear that we cannot love God as our Father; our love for Him will gradually decrease until it finally vanishes altogether.

Secondly, venial sin makes us less worthy of God's help. We believe, says St. Augustine, that venial sin does not kill the soul, but that, covering it with sores and scales, it deforms it. This deformity makes the soul less pleasing in the sight of God; it destroys the special favor and predilection of God towards it. If we were covered with leprosy, could we expect even our best friend to embrace us? The love of God towards us is somewhat like the

mutual affection of friends towards each other. When the one shows himself indifferent and cold, is not afraid of deceiving his friend, now and again treats him, although in matters of minor importance, with contempt, by degrees the love of the other must grow colder, and justly so; the former is not worthy of the latter's love. So also, although a venial sin does not kill the soul and make it altogether unworthy of God's help, it renders the soul less worthy of it, less fit for it.

Thirdly, venial sin weakens our power to resist mortal sin. It disposes the soul to the commission of mortal sin. Sickness leads to death, and as venial sin is a disease of the soul, it leads slowly to its death, if it is not cured. That this is the natural consequence of venial sin is proved by God's infallible authority. "He that contemneth small things, shall fall by little and little." (Eccli. xix, 1.) "He that is unjust in that which is little, is unjust also in that which is greater." (Luke xvi, 10.) To explain this clearly, the Holy Fathers use the following comparison. Venial sins, they say, are like the drops of water which enter by the leaks in a vessel, and fill it slowly and imperceptibly, and will cause in the course of time the vessel to sink, thus producing an effect similar to a huge wave that would swamp the vessel at once. In the first case, however, if when the leak is perceived the pumps are set at work and the leak closed, the catastrophe can be averted.

Venial sin is, next to mortal sin, the greatest evil that can befall us, greater than any natural calamity. This is why a venial sin can never lawfully be committed, even as a means of great temporal gain, or of avoiding a great misfortune, or to please our best friends.

59. *Q. Which are the chief sources of sin?*

A. The chief sources of sin are seven: Pride, Covetousness, Lust, Anger, Gluttony, Envy, and Sloth, and they are commonly called capital sins.

These sins are called capital sins, because they are the sources of all other sins. A great many interpreters of Holy Scripture refer to capital sins what our Lord says of the seven demons taking possession of man. Pride is the beginning of all evil; it was the sin of the fallen angels and also of our first parents in the earthly paradise. Pride is an excessive appreciation of our own excellence. We say

excessive, or inordinate, because the desire to excel is in itself indifferent; that desire may even be very praiseworthy, when it refers to the glory of God, the salvation of souls or the protection of one's own good name; but all excesses are vicious. Pride may be twofold, perfect or imperfect. It would be perfect, when one in his mind so exalts himself, that he refuses to submit to God or to his superiors; or acts so, as if all he had was not from God, but from himself; as if he possessed it all by his own merits; this state of mind would certainly be a mortal sin. Imperfect pride is that by which man thinks too much of himself, whilst submitting to God. Covetousness, or avarice, is the immoderate desire of earthly goods. Generally it is only a venial sin, because it is an excess in a matter which is otherwise indifferent and lawful. Often though it is a mortal sin, 1st, because it may sin grievously against charity or justice towards our neighbor; as when we do not pay our just debts, or refuse to help our neighbor in his extreme want. Covetousness is the mother of oppression of the poor, frauds, violence, treachery, theft, perfidy and numerous other sins. The covetous man is heartless.

Lust is an inordinate desire of impure pleasures. Lust or impurity is generally a mortal sin, because it is grievously opposed to the divine law, since it is one of the sins enumerated in Scripture (Gal. v, 19) which exclude from the kingdom of heaven; and also to the natural law, as it transgresses the laws of the Creator regarding the propagation of the human race. To overcome the allurements of a vice, which leads numberless souls to eternal perdition, prayer is absolutely necessary. (*Wisd. viii, 21*). A tender devotion to the Queen of Virgins will ever be the best shield against impure temptations.

Anger is an inordinate desire of revenge. This desire may exist in two ways: first, when one is internally more vexed than is reasonable, or when externally one gives way too much to his feelings, even when he is justly displeased; secondly, when one desires unjust vengeance, or to inflict unlawfully a just punishment on another, merely to satisfy one's hatred against him. Sometimes even anger is shown, towards irrational or lifeless beings; hence a mechanic is often greatly vexed at his tools or the material he is using, or in some other way; this is not properly

revenge, yet it is anger. This latter instance does not exceed venial sin, except cursing or imprecations be passionately resorted to to give vent to one's bad humor.

Gluttony is an inordinate use of food or drink. It is divided into two species, intemperance in eating, which is generally called gluttony, and intemperance in drinking, which we call drunkenness. The moderate use of food and drink constitutes the virtues of abstinence and sobriety. The moderate use of wine or other intoxicants is not forbidden by any natural or divine law. Excess in eating, which does not immediately lead to the loss of health, is generally not a mortal sin. Drunkenness is wilful excess in the use of intoxicants, causing an injury to our reason. He who is so drunk as to be deprived altogether of the use of his reason, and is thus unable to act as a man, commits a mortal sin, if he wilfully drank to excess; he who is only partially deprived of his reason, commits only a venial sin, except it becomes mortal through some circumstances, such as, quarrels, fights, etc., arising therefrom, or on account of the scandal given. When a drunkard foresees or knows from experience, or is told by others that he commits certain grievous sins when drunk or under the influence of intoxicants, he becomes responsible for all such acts, if he drinks to excess. A man drinking to excess, though not deprived of the use of his reason, may yet be guilty of a mortal sin, if the excess considerably injures his health, for man is not the absolute master of his body, he cannot and may not dispose of it, as he pleases.

Envy is a sorrow over the welfare of our neighbor, as if we were the losers by it; as when we grieve that others are as rich, as well off, as successful, etc., as we are, because we imagine that we lose by it. If we are sorry over the welfare of our neighbor for any other reason, it is not envy. Envy is in its species a mortal sin, because it is grievously opposed to the love of our neighbor; it is, however, very often only a venial sin, because it is not deliberately wilful, or it does not concern a grievous matter. The worst kind of envy is the envying of the supernatural and spiritual goods of our neighbor. From envy as from their source follow detraction, calumny, joy at another's misfortune, sorrow at his success. This is the great sin of the devils in hell, who envied man from the beginning.

Sloth is a torpor of mind, which may consist in a reluc-

tance or carelessness to do right and to practise virtue on account of the trouble attached to it; in this case it is not a special, but a general vice, because all vices endeavor to shun the good of the opposite virtue. Considered as a special vice, it means tediousness in spiritual things; tediousness, for instance concerning the friendship of God, which it considers as bad because it is too difficult to obtain and too hard to preserve by the laborious practice of virtue and the avoiding of pleasures, whence it follows that the one so affected, cares little for the friendship of God. In itself this special kind of sloth is a very grievous sin, because it is diametrically opposed to the love of God, and draws us away from it. Despair is the worst offspring of this insidious spiritual disease.

LESSON SEVENTH

ON THE INCARNATION AND REDEMPTION

60. *Q. Did God abandon man after he fell into sin?*
A. God did not abandon man after he fell into sin, but promised him a Redeemer, who was to satisfy for man's sin and reopen to him the gates of heaven.

God could, without injustice, have treated our first parents as he had treated the fallen angels. He might have abandoned them and left them eternally in their sin. But He willed not that they should be without hope, and whilst striking them in His justice, He causes the light of His mercy to shine upon them. God said to the serpent in the earthly Paradise: "I will put enmities between thee and the woman, and thy seed and her seed, she shall crush thy head and thou shalt lie in wait for her heel." (Gen. iii, 15.) It is as if He said to the serpent: "Thou didst attack the first woman and overcamest her, but I will raise another woman, who will crush thy head, against whom thou shalt be powerless. This woman, virgin and mother, will bring forth a Son, who shalt be victorious over thee." The promise of a Redeemer was clear. The Catechism gives us also the reason of His coming, viz: to satisfy for man's sin and to reopen to him the gates of heaven. Man was altogether unable to atone for his sin. All his works of mortification and penance could never have been an adequate satisfaction for his sin. Sin in itself is so enormous an evil, so heinous an insult to the Almighty, that all the good works of men, and even of angels, could never compensate God's justice for it. By sin man had lost his spiritual life, and was unable to perform any spiritual or supernatural acts. His subsequent sufferings could not avail to wipe out his sin or atone for it, any more than the sufferings accompanying a disease can take away the disease itself. The person offended was the Infinite God; His justice required infinite compensation, which only an infinite Person could give. This compensation was to be

given Him by the divine Redeemer, who, being God and Man, is able superabundantly to satisfy for the sin of our first parents. By sin man had also closed against himself the gates of heaven, where nothing undefiled can enter. Thousands of its citizens had been cast out of it the moment they were defiled by sin, and their places could not be taken by men who also were defiled by sin. As man was unable to satisfy for his sins, so also he was unable to reopen for himself the gates of heaven. Without the Redeemer, heaven would have remained eternally closed to the fallen human race. The coming of a Redeemer, promised from the beginning, was delayed for thousands of years, that man might duly appreciate and welcome Him, after having so long sighed for Him.

61. *Q. Who is the Redeemer?*

A. Our Blessed Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ is the Redeemer of mankind.

The promise made to fallen mankind, represented in the garden of Eden by Adam and Eve, was frequently renewed in the course of time. The Redeemer was prefigured by diverse things and persons; the time of His coming was foretold; He was so clearly described in prophecies, that He might be easily recognized and distinguished from everyone else. These oracles concerning the Redeemer became in the course of time more numerous and explicit, in order to prepare the world for His coming. Repeatedly was the Redeemer promised to Abraham when God said to him that all the nations of the earth should be blessed in his seed. The same promise was renewed to Isaac and Jacob. He was prefigured by Adam, Moses, the brazen serpent, by Jonas cast into the sea, that the ship might be saved. Scripture gives us the clearest evidence that these were actually figures of the Redeemer to come. He was described as of the tribe of Juda, as descending from the royal family of David; He was to see the light of day in Bethlehem, and be born of a Virgin Mother. His sublime holiness, His wonderful power of working miracles, and especially of healing the sick, His passion and death, His resurrection and the kingdom or the Church He was to establish on earth, were all foretold by the Prophets, and so clearly that He could easily be distinguished from all others. The time had also been determined, especially

by the prophecies of Jacob, Daniel, Aggeus and Malachias. He was eagerly and universally expected, not only by the Jews, but even by the Gentiles. Who is that Redeemer, if not our Blessed Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ? In Jesus of Nazareth, and in Him alone are all the prophecies, which regard the characteristics of the Redeemer and the time of His coming, fulfilled. He comes from the family of David, is born of a Virgin in Bethlehem, at the time that the stranger Herod of Idumea reigned in Judea. He began His preaching and His miracles at the end of the 69th week of Daniel; in the middle of the seventieth week He was killed, shortly after that the temple, which He had honored by His visits, was totally destroyed. The whole New Testament and all Christian tradition testify that Jesus of Nazareth was the promised Redeemer. He is our Lord and Saviour, as His name Jesus Christ implies. Jesus, of Hebrew origin, means God-Saviour, God-Redeemer; the Son of God become man was given by God Himself, through the Archangel Gabriel, the name of Jesus, because He would redeem His people from sin and its terrible consequences. Christ is a Greek word meaning the same as Messiah in Hebrew, viz: anointed. In the Old Law prophets and teachers, priests and kings were anointed, and so Jesus was anointed, as He was our great Prophet and Teacher, our High Priest and Supreme King.

62. *Q. What do you believe of Jesus Christ?*

A. I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, the second Person of the Blessed Trinity, true God and true man.

The Catholic Church, and with her, all her true children believe of Jesus Christ what is so beautifully and distinctly expressed in the Athanasian Creed. "It is necessary for salvation to believe also faithfully the Incarnation of our Lord Jesus Christ. This is thus the right faith that we believe and profess that our Lord Jesus Christ the Son of God, is God and man. He is God, born of the substance of the Father, before all ages, and He is man, born of the substance of His mother in time; He is perfect God and perfect man, having a rational human soul and a human body, equal to the Father according to His Divinity, less than the Father according to His humanity. Though both God and man, yet He is not two, but one Christ. He is

one not by the conversion of the divinity into the flesh, but by the assumption of the humanity in God; one altogether, not by a confusion of substance, but by the unity of Person. For as the rational soul and the human body form but one man, so also, God and man form but one Christ." This is in brief what we believe of Jesus Christ. The question may be asked: was it necessary that the Son of God should become man in order to satisfy for our sins? The answer to this is that on the part of God there could certainly not be such necessity; the Incarnation was on the part of God altogether a free gift. But what in regard to this necessity on the part of man? We answer with St. Thomas: Absolutely speaking to take away sin the Incarnation was not necessary, if God wished to accept an imperfect satisfaction; but in the supposition that God required from man a perfect or worthy, that is, an adequate satisfaction, the Incarnation was necessary, in order to enable a divine Person to satisfy God's justice for the sins of man. No created being can fully atone for his own sin, nor for the sins of anyone else; because, as the sin committed against God is, in some manner, infinite, it requires an expiation of infinite value, which cannot be given but by a divine Person, who should be, by nature, true God and true man.

63. *Q. Why is Jesus Christ true God?*

A. Jesus Christ is true God because He is the true and only Son of God the Father.

In the Nicene Creed, which is read at Mass, we say: "I believe in one Lord Jesus Christ. . . . God of God, Light of Light, true God of true God." Jesus Christ is true God because He has the nature of God, being the true and only Son of God the Father. Scripture clearly proves it. Christ is truly God, if He is described as such by the Prophets and the Evangelists, if He calls Himself God and performs the works of God, if Jesus and the Apostles understood His testimony in that light. Now Scripture testifies all this to be the case. Therefore we say: Christ is God. 1st, David says (Ps. 109): "The Lord said to My Lord: Sit Thou at My right hand. . . . With Thee is the principality in the day of Thy strength, in the brightness of the saints: from the womb before the day star I begot Thee." The Gospel of St. Matthew shows (xxii, 43) that

in the above text Christ is the Person spoken of. 2nd, St. John begins his gospel with these words: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God and the Word was God: The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by Him. . . . And the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us. . . . John beareth witness of Him." We can make from these words the following conclusive argument: The Word Incarnate is true God; now the Word Incarnate is the one of whom John the Baptist beareth witness, therefore Christ Jesus is true God. 3rd, He proclaims Himself true God. "I and the Father are one," He says. (John x, 30.) "The Jews then took up stones to stone Him . . . because that Thou, being a man, makest Thyself God." (John x, 31, 33.) 4th, He performed the works of God. "You say: Thou blasphemest, because I said I am the Son of God. If I do not the works of My Father, believe Me not. But if I do, though you will not believe Me, believe the works, that you may know and believe that the Father is in Me, and I in the Father." (Ibid. 36.) When the leper comes up to Him and says: "Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean," Jesus said: "I will, be thou made clean" (Mat. viii, 3); very unlike the Apostles, who worked their miracles in the name of Jesus of Nazareth. 5th, The Jews understood exactly what Jesus meant, when He called Himself God, that is why they wanted to kill Him as a blasphemer. 6th, The Apostles understood Him the same way: "Let this mind be in you," says St. Paul, "which was also in Christ Jesus, who being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God" (Phil. ii, 5). Tradition is, indeed, unanimous in proclaiming Jesus Christ as true God. One miracle performed in His own name should be sufficient proof for our reason, and Jesus performed so many miracles. And yet notwithstanding these the Jews would not believe Him, and will persist until the end of the world in their obstinacy.

So also, so many others are wilfully slumbering in the darkness of heathenism and infidelity, although they have sufficient light to see their mistake. Still greater is the number of those, who, whilst calling themselves Christians, yet refuse the homage of submission and love to the One whose name they have unworthily assumed.

64. *Q. Why is Jesus Christ true man?*

A. Jesus Christ is true man, because He is the Son of the Blessed Virgin Mary, and has a body and soul like ours.

In 451 the Council of Chalcedon, held under Pope St. Leo the Great, defined against the Eutychians as a dogma of faith, that Christ is perfect in His humanity, having a rational soul and a body, and being of the same substance as we; according to His human nature like unto us in all things except sin. Scripture clearly proves it. It calls Christ man and constantly ascribes to Him acts proper only to human nature. "You seek to kill Me," said Jesus to the Jews, "a man who have spoken the truth to you" (John viii, 40). "The Word was made flesh," that is, was made man. The Gospels narrate how Christ was born, that He was circumcised, that He walked, ate, slept, wept; He is said to have been tired, to have suffered and died; all this cannot be said except of a true man. He was of the same substance as we are, "Conceived in the virginal womb," says the Ven. Bede, "He took His body not from nothing, but from His Mother's body, otherwise He could not be called Son of man, if He had not His origin from man."

"Jesus Christ was conceived by the Holy Ghost, and born of the Virgin Mary," as the Symbol of faith composed by the Apostles before their dispersion clearly tells us. St. Matthew and St. Luke explain the same fact in their Gospels; thereby the Prophecy of Isaiah that a "Virgin would conceive and bring forth a son, whose name should be Emmanuel, that is, God with us," was fulfilled. According to His human nature Jesus was the Son of the Blessed Virgin Mary; His body and soul were like ours; His humanity was perfect, being composed of a sensible body and a rational and free soul. His body was a real body, as is clear from the words of Christ Himself, when, appearing to the Apostles after His Resurrection, He told them: "Handle and see, for a spirit hath no flesh and bones, as you see Me to have." Christ saw, heard and suffered as we do. It is equally clear that He had a soul like ours. "Bowing His head, He gave up the ghost." "He was offered because it was His own will." "He was obedient even unto death." Christ's body and soul were like ours in all

things, except sin. Since the sin of Adam defects are found in our nature, as we have seen before; physical defects, such as, mortality in our body, and passibility in both body and soul; moral defects, such as sin and peccability; and mixed defects, such as ignorance and concupiscence. Christ assumed the physical defects of our nature, He of His own free will subjected Himself to death and sufferings. Christ assumed our sins to expiate them, but did not assume the moral defects of vitiated nature; "He knew no sin" (II Cor. v, 21), and therefore could not commit sin. Neither were there in Him the evil effects of ignorance and concupiscence. There are good reasons, why Christ assumed the physical defects of our nature. 1st, That He might satisfy for sin, by assuming the penalties of sin and undergoing them in our place; 2ndly, That He might strengthen the faith of His disciples in His Incarnation. 3rdly, That He might give us an example of patience and fortitude.

Of the external form of Christ's body, Holy Scripture does not speak. It appears, however, most probable, that Christ was neither deformed, nor assumed a worldly elegance of form; His exterior must have been full of dignity, such as to be a mirror or a reflection of His interior virtue and holiness.

65. *Q. How many natures are there in Jesus Christ?* A. In Jesus Christ there are two natures, the nature of God and the nature of man.

Heretics have of old discussed, in their way, the wonderful union of the human and divine nature of Christ in one person, and arrived at the most absurd conclusions. Nestorius called the divine nature the Word, the Son of God, and the human nature Christ, the Son of Mary. According to him the Word and Christ were united by the most ardent affection; the Word even dwelt in Christ. So Nestorius made of Christ two persons, the one the Son of God, and the other the son of Mary, and he called Mary not the Mother of God, but only the Mother of Christ. He was led to this conclusion by the absurd idea that the union of the two natures was made after Christ was already a human person. According to Eutyches the two natures were so united, as to be transformed into a third one. Be-

fore the union there were two natures, but in the very moment of the Incarnation they were absorbed into one.

According to the Monothelites the two natures were so united, that in the union they did not remain altogether distinct, and that the human element was partly absorbed by the divine element, at least, in as far as the will and its operations were concerned. According to them there was in Christ no human will; by means of the soul the divine will moved the body to action.

In this question the Catechism gives the correct Catholic view, as opposed to Eutyches. The Catholic Church teaches us that the two natures in Christ are hypostatically united, that is, so united that the divine and the human natures remain entire, not confused, nor mixed, and endowed with their respective properties and operations, subsisting in one divine Person. It is an article of faith proclaimed by the Nicene Creed and anew by the Council of Chalcedon. For proofs of this dogma we refer to our explanation of the answers to the two preceding questions. We have proved that Jesus Christ is true God, and also that He is true man; both natures must then remain after the union, as otherwise He could not be true God and the true man. Although in Scripture this dogma does not appear in the same words as the Church proposes it to us, yet it is clear from the fact that it attributes to one and the same Christ divine properties which apply only to the divine nature, and human properties which belong only to the human nature. It tells us, on the one hand, that Christ was born from all eternity, that He is equal to and one with the Father; on the other hand, it tells us that Christ was born from the seed of David, made from a woman, that He is less than the Father; implicitly therefore Holy Scripture affirms the two natures in Christ. This dogma is also proved from the absurd consequences of the contrary doctrine. If there is only one nature in Christ, it is either the divine or the human, or neither of the two, or, at once both divine and human. If there is only a divine nature, Christ is not man; if only the human, He is not God; if neither of the two, He is neither God nor man; if it is at once both divine and human, such a nature is not the nature of God, because He cannot be anything human or created; it can neither be the nature of man; and so

Christ would not be consubstantial with His eternal Father, nor with His temporal Mother. We logically admit then with the Catechism that there are two distinct natures in Christ, the human and the divine nature.

66. *Q. Is Jesus Christ more than one person?*
A. No, Jesus Christ is but one Divine Person.

This is the Catholic belief directly opposed to the heresy of Nestorius. This dogma has the most evident Scriptural authority for itself. It may be summed up in the following argument. We must recognize in Christ but one person, and that a divine Person, if one and the same divine Person, that is, the Word, is represented as acting in the divine as well as in the human nature; in other words, if to one and the same divine Person are attributed the actions of both natures. Scripture clearly proves this to be the case; therefore we say there can be but one Person in Christ, viz: the Divine Person. We will give but one text which explains itself. "Christ, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God; but emptied Himself taking the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men and in habit found as a man." (Phil. ii, 6, 7.) This dogma is besides corroborated by the absurd consequences of the Nestorian heresy. Supposing that in Christ there were two persons, the necessary sequel would be a denial of the whole Gospel; for then there would be not one, but two Christs; this would entail a denial of His divinity, of the mystery of His Incarnation and of the whole economy of our redemption.

Besides, the same Christ is said to be God and man; but this cannot be said unless we suppose a hypostatic or personal union of the human nature with the Person of the God the Son. I can say, for instance, this man is dressed, and the one so dressed is a man, but I cannot say: This dress is a man, because dress and man are two distinct subsisting beings. I can say of a Prophet, in whom the Holy Ghost dwells by His inspirations: this Prophet is a man and, this man is full of the Spirit of God; but I cannot say: this Prophet is God and man. Therefore, whereas the same Christ is said to be God and man, in the true and obvious meaning of the words, His human and divine natures must necessarily be united in one person. We add here a few words in answer to the heresy of the Monothe-

lites. As in Christ there are two natures, so also there are two natural operations and wills. Christ worked miracles, granted pardon of sins, promised and gave eternal life; these are divine operations. Christ hungered, thirsted, wept, grew tired, suffered, was wounded and died; these are human operations. We have from Christ's own testimony, that He had two wills, as is clear from these words: "My Father, if it be possible, let this chalice pass from Me. Nevertheless not as I will, but as Thou wilt." (Mat. xxvi, 39.) There was in Christ a human will praying that the chalice might be removed, and a divine will, one with the will of His heavenly Father.

67. *Q. Was Jesus Christ always God?*

A. Jesus Christ was always God, as He is the second Person of the Blessed Trinity, equal to His Father from all eternity.

We have seen (Qu. 63) that Jesus Christ is true God, that He is God the Son, the second Person of the Blessed Trinity, and as such must always have been, as God has no beginning (Qu. 14). He is equal to His Father from all eternity as we have explained (Question 28).

68. *Q. Was Jesus Christ always man?*

A. Jesus Christ was not always man, but became man at the time of His Incarnation.

Reason tells us that Jesus Christ could not always have been man, since man cannot be eternal. As man He is a creature, and began to exist in time. The arguments which prove that Jesus Christ is man, will also prove that He was not always man (Qu. 64). Jesus Christ became man at the moment of His Incarnation. The Nestorian idea of the Incarnation is, that the human nature of Christ was first perfected before it was united to the divine nature. The Catholic and only tenable view is that the Son of God assumed His humanity and was united to it at the very first moment His humanity commenced to exist. The Nestorian idea opens the door to numerous heresies. In the same way as the human soul is united to the body the very moment they commence to exist, so was the Divinity of Christ united to His humanity, the very moment it commenced to be.

69. *Q. What do you mean by Incarnation?*
A. By Incarnation I mean that the Son of God was made man.

God-Man is a hard word for proud reason. The divinity revealed under the human form had nothing very peculiar amongst the pagans, who admitted an innumerable number of gods. But with them it was not God who became man; it was the deifying of man; man became God. The Incarnation of the Son of God is the most sublime manifestation of God's incomprehensible and infinite power. We see a minor revelation of that power in the union of the soul and body in man, the fact that they are united in one substance testifies to its possibility. Saying that it is impossible for God to become man is needlessly circumscribing God's omnipotence. Yet the Incarnation remains a mystery; it is even the beginning and the end of all mysteries; and although it is not against reason, yet it far surpasses it; a reason the more to accept it, for it is of its nature such a divine fact, that if God Himself had not revealed it, man could never have conceived an idea of it. The Rationalists would reject this dogma as an unreasonable mystery, forgetting that, whilst they claim to believe in the existence of God, they refuse to God what they grant to man, because all concede that man can raise himself far above simple reason. To say that a man is reasonable, is not saying much in his praise. Heroism is not the act of every man, whilst reason is most common, for he that is without it cannot be a man. Why should we then deny to God the power of performing acts, which surpass our reason? God showed His omnipotence in the creation of the world. In the redemption of mankind He reveals especially His love. If human love in its acts is sometimes incomprehensible to cold reason, why should not the works of God, prompted by His infinite love, surpass reason? If the human heart is already inscrutable, how can we deny that the heart of God is like an abyss, of which no created mind can fathom the depth. St. Thomas observes that the Incarnation of the Son of God was the most convenient manifestation of His power, of His wisdom and of His love. What greater token of His omnipotence could He give than to unite elements so different in themselves? What wiser plan to complete the universe than to unite the

two extremes, the Word of God, the origin of all creatures, and the human nature, which of all things was created last? What nobler mark of goodness on the part of the Creator than to communicate Himself to His creatures in Jesus Christ, and through Him to the human race? "The Word was made flesh," says St. John; It came down from heaven to assume human nature, that God might be adequately glorified, and that man might have, as the brother of Christ in His human nature, the rights of a child of God, and be co-heir with Christ of His heavenly glory.

70. *Q. How was the Son of God made man?*

A. The Son of God was conceived and made man by the power of the Holy Ghost, in the womb of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

The Incarnation of the Son of God was not a natural event. He became man by a peculiar operation of the Holy Ghost, that is, by a miracle of the Holy Ghost. This is clear from the words of the Archangel Gabriel to the Blessed Virgin: "The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee and the power of the Most High shall overshadow Thee" (Luke i, 35.) The Son of God did not become man in the ordinary way, but in a manner surpassing all the powers of nature, that is, by a miracle. The conception of Christ was the work of the Holy Ghost, who, when the Word descended into the womb of the Blessed Virgin fitted Him a human soul and a human body, formed of the blood of His immaculate Mother. This operation of the Holy Ghost was not by way of generation, whereas He did not produce a being by nature equal to Himself, but it was a miraculous efficacy granting fecundity to the Virgin in a supernatural manner. This operation although ascribed to the Holy Ghost, is common to the three divine Persons, like all other divine operations, which refer to the creatures. It is ascribed however, in a particular manner, to the Holy Ghost, because it is a work of love, and works of that nature are particularly ascribed to the Holy Ghost. We should carefully distinguish the Incarnation itself of the Son of God and the operation whereby this miracle was effected. God the Son alone became man, but His Incarnation was effected by the three divine Persons. Jesus Christ assumed human nature in the womb of the Blessed

Virgin Mary. It was a supernatural event, which did not rob the Mother of what she prized more than the honor of being the Mother of God, her virginity. We call her therefore the Virgin by excellence, because amongst all the daughters of Eve to her alone was granted the honor of being a Mother and remaining a Virgin. Before consenting to be the Mother of God, she insisted on knowing that her virginity would not have to be sacrificed. So highly did she value the privilege, which renders men like the Angels, that she would rather have foregone the honor of Mother of God, than lose her virginity, for she knew it to be so pleasing in the sight of God. Her divine Maternity was not subjected to the punishment pronounced by God upon the first woman after her prevarication. God said to Eve: "In sorrow shalt thou bring forth children." (Gen. iii, 16.) These words did not affect the woman, who was destined to crush the head of the infernal serpent. Without pain or sorrow or the loss of her virginity did she bring forth the Son of God, who was truly and indeed her own Son also.

71. *Q. Is the Blessed Virgin truly the Mother of God?*
A. The Blessed Virgin Mary is truly the Mother of God, because the same divine Person who is the Son of God, is also the Son of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

The Blessed Virgin is truly and justly called the Mother of God, because Jesus Christ, the God made man, is truly her Son. St. Luke expressly states: "The Holy which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God." (Luke i, 35.) St. Elizabeth calls the Blessed Virgin: "the Mother of my Lord" (Ibid. 43). The Blessed Virgin called our Saviour "my Son." The general Council of Ephesus, held in 431, condemned Nestorius as a heretic for denying to the Blessed Virgin the title of Mother of God. Those who with Nestorius refuse to give her that title, show that they do not realize the meaning of the Incarnation of the Son of God. They virtually deny that the Redeemer is a divine Person; hence they thereby deny the efficacy of the Redemption; according to them the Blood shed on Calvary was not the blood of a God-Man, but merely the blood of a man. Jesus Christ is but one person, the Blessed Virgin is the Mother of Jesus Christ, therefore she is the Mother of a divine Person, the Mother of God. By call-

ing the Blessed Virgin the Mother of God, we do not, of course, mean that Mary is the mother of the divine nature, which is uncreated and eternal; to assert this would not only be absurd, but blasphemous. It does not mean either that Mary became the Mother of a person that did not exist before, because the Son of God, who is also the Son of Mary, existed from all eternity. It means that the Blessed Virgin is Mother of God the Son according to His human nature, which He assumed in time and which He had not before He took it from Mary; before then He had only one nature, the Divine nature. The Catechism explained in a previous question that Jesus Christ has two natures, the nature of God and the nature of man. Mary gave birth to a perfect and complete human nature, which at the very instant that she conceived it of the Holy Ghost, God the Son made His own, assumed it, and united it to His divine nature; the two natures so united forming but one divine Person. The Blessed Virgin, the Mother of Jesus Christ, is therefore truly the Mother of God, that is, the Mother of God the Son, from the time that He became man, or took His body from the substance of His mother, and was born of her into the world. The Blessed Virgin, being the Mother of God, as explained, does not thereby become God herself, this would be a contradiction; she was a creature before that wonderful event, and she remained a creature. All her glory, graces and privileges were the free gift of God, but it is no less true that God chose her to be His Mother, and who will dare to limit God's omnipotence and say or think that this is impossible? "He that is mighty hath done great things to me" (Luke ii, 48), so she herself declares in her Canticle of praise. The same Person was born of His Father before all eternity, and born in time of the Blessed Virgin according to His human nature. Therefore she is truly the Mother of God.

72. Q. Did the Son of God become man immediately after the sin of our first parents?

A. The Son of God did not become man immediately after the sin of our first parents, but was promised to them as a Redeemer.

In Question 60 we have explained the necessity of a Redeemer on the part of man. Sin had made him an enemy

of God, spiritually dead, unable by his own exertions ever to recover the lost treasure. The Catechism here asks the question why God allowed more than four thousand years to pass between the promise of a Redeemer and the fulfilment of that promise. God could have sent the Redeemer almost immediately after the fall of our first parents. Why did He delay so long? St. Thomas answers: "First, on account of the nature of man's sin, which had its origin in pride; therefore he was to be redeemed in such a way, that, only after being humbled, he would realize the necessity of a Redeemer. God at first left man with his free will under the natural law; afterwards he placed him under the Old Law, that he might thus experience the extent of his weakness; and, seeing his disease grow worse, he should feel impelled to call upon his physician and seek the help of grace." Man had sinned by pride; he desired, like Lucifer in heaven, to attain a greatness above that which God had been willing to give him. To cure this disease permanently it had to be cured radically. He had been proud; to become predisposed to receive the fruits of the Redemption, he had to be humiliated. That he might realize his nothingness more thoroughly, man under the natural law, was left to himself, and was to learn by personal experience how needy he was. But as man moved further away from his God, the Old Law was given to bring him back to his God. The disease, however, had taken too deep roots; the law did not bring about the change intended, on the contrary man still went on the downward path; till in the end he noticed his need, his infirmity, and began to look for help, whence help could come. God delayed so long becoming man and taking upon Himself our iniquities, that the favor might be all the more appreciated, after man had longed thousands of years for it. The Incarnation of the Son of God was the greatest mark of love that God could give to man; had it been bestowed immediately upon the first descendants of Adam, they would most probably have failed to appreciate it, and would have proved ungrateful, as Adam had been ungrateful for the great favor of existence bestowed on him by God. Man when left to himself realizes best his own weakness. After the fall God left man to himself by withdrawing that special help of His grace, which He grants only to His children. But He promised him a Redeemer; the faith in Him, handed

down as a precious heritage to his children, would eventually open him eyes, and induce him to sigh and pray for the Redeemer's coming; this faith with the works it elicited was to keep man from total shipwreck.

73. *Q. How could they be saved who lived before the Son of God became man?*

A. They who lived before the Son of God became man could be saved by believing in a Redeemer to come and by keeping the commandments.

We are saved now by having the merits of Our Lord's passion applied to our soul. During the four thousand or more years, which preceded the coming of Jesus Christ, God in His mercy applied to men the future merits of His Son. He granted them graces sufficient, which, if they used properly, would enable them to live in justice and holiness. That this must have been so, is clear from the fact that in Holy Scripture many names are given of men, who lived before our Lord, and who were just and holy, among the Jews, the chosen people of God, and even among the heathens. Abel, Seth, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob were called just men, and are certainly saved. Among the Gentiles, that is, among the nations that were not God's chosen people, there were Saints, such as, Melchisedech and the holy man Job. They and all others with them could be saved by fulfilling the two conditions mentioned in the Catechism. They had, 1st, to believe in a Redeemer to come and 2ndly, to keep the commandments. St. Paul gives it as a general rule that "without faith it is impossible to please God and he that cometh to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder to them that seek Him." (Hebr. xi, 6.) The faith required for salvation is not a philosophical faith, by which we theoretically believe that there is a God; if we believe that God is, we must also believe that He has a right to our love and veneration, and that our love for Him necessarily implies the fulfilling of His will, or in other words, the keeping of the commandments. The faith in a Redeemer to come was, indeed, not as clear with them, as it should be with us. "The Redeemer expected to come has been at all times," says the great French orator Bossuet, "the consolation and the hope of the children of God; religion is always uniform, always the same since the beginning of

the world; it has always recognized the same God as Creator, and the same Jesus Christ as the Saviour of mankind."

Those living before Christ could be saved in the same way as those who live after Christ, with the exception that where the former had to believe in a Redeemer to come, the latter have to believe in a Redeemer having already come. It may not be out of place here to show, that sufficient grace for faith and salvation in all places and at all times is not denied to all infidels, either to those to whom the truth has been preached or to those who never had the privilege of hearing the Gospel preached. St. John tells us that Christ is the true light enlightening all men coming into this world. St. John Chrysostom beautifully explains this in the following words: "He enlightens all men in as far as He gives light to all. If any one wilfully closes the eyes of his mind and refuses to receive the rays of that light, it is not the fault of the light, if he remains in darkness; but of his own wickedness, since he wilfully deprives himself of that favor. Grace has been given to all." This is also clear from the fact that God wishes to save all men. Those who have heard the word of God preached to them, and are invited by grace to elicit an act of faith, sin by not eliciting that act; therefore it must be possible for them to do what is right. To all others, if they remove the obstacles, God gives the graces necessary to their salvation, otherwise it could not be said that He wishes to save them. But they must and can remove the obstacles, that is, they must keep the commandments, and thus avoid sin. He who does this, who avoids all that his conscience tells him that is wrong, will most assuredly receive the gift of faith and be able with the grace of God to save his soul. Even if a man had been born far from civilization, and had grown far away from all human society, says St. Thomas, and had had no other company than the wild beasts, and would follow the dictates of reason, of his conscience, in his conduct, in doing good and avoiding evil, we must hold for certain that God, in His own good time, and even by a miracle, were it required, will make known and impart to him all that is necessary for his salvation. Just as those can be saved now, who are for the time being outside of the pale of the Church, so also could the pagans be saved before the coming of

Christ, if they lived up to the dictates of their conscience, and kept the commandments according to the light given them.

74. *Q. On what day was the Son of God conceived and made man?*

A. The Son of God was conceived and made man on Annunciation day — the day on which the Angel Gabriel announced to the Blessed Virgin Mary, that she was to be the Mother of God.

St. Luke narrates how God's message was delivered to the Blessed Virgin by the angel Gabriel in the following manner: "In the sixth month (after the same angel had appeared to Zachary and announced to him the birth of John the Baptist) the angel Gabriel was sent from God into the city of Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin espoused to a man, whose name was Joseph, of the house of David, and the virgin's name was Mary. And the angel being come in said to her: Hail, full of grace, the Lord is with thee, blessed art thou among women. Who having heard was troubled at his saying, and thought with herself what manner of salutation this should be. And the angel said to her: Fear not, Mary, for thou hast found grace with God. Behold thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and shalt bring forth a son; and thou shalt call his name Jesus. He shall be great and shall be called the Son of the Most High; and the Lord shall give unto Him the throne of David His father; and He shall reign in the house of Jacob forever, and of His kingdom, there shall be no end. And Mary said to the angel: How shall this be done, because I know not man. And the angel answering said to her: The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Most High shall overshadow thee, and therefore also the Holy, which shall be born of thee, shall be called the Son of God. And behold thy cousin Elizabeth, she has also conceived a son in her old age, and this is the sixth month with her that is called barren, because no word shall be impossible with God. And Mary said: Behold the handmaid of the Lord, be it done to me according to thy word. And the angel departed from her." (Luke i, 26–38.)

This colloquy between the Blessed Virgin and the heavenly messenger is, according to a very ancient tradition, implicitly credited by the Church, supposed to have taken place on

the 25th of March, on which day the Church celebrates every year the Annunciation of the Blessed Virgin. The angel salutes Mary as a subject salutes a sovereign; the one so honored wonders at it; never before had a heavenly messenger so respectfully treated a creature. The message he bears is from the Blessed Trinity, who in a manner submit their eternal plan of saving man to the humble Virgin, and not until she has accepted, will the Almighty come down from heaven and be made man. *"Be it done to me according to thy word,"* by these words the Virgin ratifies the decrees of the Eternal Counsel. Whereupon the angel disappears to bring before the throne of God the word, which saves the world and rescues from the clutches of Satan the dominion over men's souls. No wonder that all the disciples of Jesus have the most profound respect and veneration for the Virgin of Nazareth. How can they ever honor her as much as they should, when they see her so honored by the Blessed Trinity and God's heavenly messenger?

75. *Q. On what day was Christ born?*

A. Christ was born on Christmas day in a stable at Bethlehem, nineteen hundred years ago.

Jesus was born in the days of King Herod, that is, Herod the Great, son of Antipater, an Idumean by birth. He was king of the Jews, but tributary and subject to the Emperor of the Romans, from whom he held his commission. St. Luke adds that the Saviour was born under Cæsar Augustus, at the time that a decree went out that the whole world should be enrolled, viz: the whole of the world subjected to the Roman empire. The most common opinion places the date two or three years before the Christian era, or at least 4000 years after the creation of the world. We have had occasion to observe before that the chronology of Scripture is very obscure. Tradition has always held that Christ was born on Christmas day on the 25th day of December. An objection is made by some against this date from what St. Luke narrates of the apparition of the angel to the shepherds, who were keeping night watches over their flocks; they pretend that in the heart of winter there were no sheep in the pastures. They had probably never visited Palestine, or else they would have known that the weather there in December is generally

mild enough for the flocks to remain in the fields day and night. According to the Holy Fathers Christ was born on the sixth day of the week, that is, the same day on which man had been created. We can gather from Scripture that this wonderful event occurred in the night. Christ was born in Bethlehem, a little town of Judea about 5 miles south of Jerusalem. It is about 2600 feet above sea level, on a mountain of calcareous rock, surrounded by fertile valleys. Bethlehem was one of the oldest cities of Palestine, and existed already in the days of Jacob, and was then called Ephrata; it was the birth place of David. St. Luke tells us that Christ was after His birth laid in a manger; this leads us naturally to the conclusion that He was born in a stable; and the reason why such a place was selected, is given, that is, because there was no room for them in the inn. Inns were in the East places to accommodate travellers, where they could pass the night free of charge. It is very likely that Mary and Joseph knocked at many a door, but there was no room for them, whether it was because of their appearance, or because the inn and the private houses were already overcrowded with travellers, is not stated. The stable must have been a natural grotto in the rock; the presence of the ox and the ass show what this cave was used for. A Franciscan living at Bethlehem in his Guide for pilgrims, gives us the following description of the stable: "The grotto of the Nativity, to which a stair of 16 steps leads, is mostly a natural cave. It is formed into a bank of soft calcareous rock, and covered by an artificial vault. Its length is about 38 feet and its mean width a little over 10 feet. West of the oratory of the crib, which is about 11 feet by 7, is an excavation in form of a manger, in which the newly born Infant was laid."

Never before was an infant born amid such poor, miserable surroundings, and yet He was the King of Glory! He came into this world the poorest of the poor. His birth and His whole subsequent career goes to show that the ways of the world are not the ways of God.

76. *Q. How long did Christ live on earth?*

A. Christ lived on earth about thirty-three years, and led a most holy life in poverty and suffering.

Christ lived on earth thirty-three years and a few months.

The God-Man did not assume peccability, a defect arising from the sin of our first parents. It was impossible that Christ should be liable to commit sin. For all His actions were the actions of one and the same divine Person; that Christ should commit sin is a contradiction in itself. It follows quite naturally that Christ led a most holy life; hence His will was wholly conformed to the will of His Father. The Catechism adds that the holiness of Christ shone forth especially in poverty and suffering. These were to be the hardest lessons He would leave for His disciples to learn; hence He wished to teach them these lessons thoroughly by His own example. The circumstances accompanying His birth, show in what poverty He began His earthly existence. He is born in a stable of a Mother highly connected, but poor herself. His foster-father was a poor artisan. Although having to work hard in his home at Nazareth to make a living, St. Joseph must have found it doubly hard in the land of Egypt among strangers; often must the Holy Family have experienced the pangs of poverty. In His hidden life at Nazareth Jesus never attempted to gather for Himself or His parents the wealth of the world. In His public life, when proclaiming to His disciples and to the world the maxims, the following of which will lead to happiness, He first mentions the blessedness of the poor, whose spirit is not set upon riches. (Mat. v, 3.) Afterwards Jesus could truly say: "The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air, nests: but the Son of man hath not where to lay His head." (Mat. viii, 20.) Before dying on the cross, He will be stripped of His garments, which will be divided amongst His executioners. He dies as He had lived, the poorest of the poor. This state of extreme poverty was not imposed upon Him against His will; being the omnipotent God, He could, indeed, have enjoyed all that the world could give and even far more. But no! He selects poverty for Himself. It is not riches, that will take away the consequences of sin in the world; it is not riches that will make man happy; on the contrary, they are usually a serious obstacle to temporal and eternal happiness. Who could complain of poverty, or set his heart on riches when they behold the Son of God leading a life of extreme poverty? As to His holiness in suffering, nearly every page of Holy Scripture gives us abundant proof of it. He was the "Man of sor-

rows," not only during the latter part of His life, but from its very beginning He endures mortal anguish, bodily suffering. No created intelligence can form an idea of what Jesus Christ actually suffered. He suffered as only His human nature supported by His Divinity could suffer. The sufferings of Christ in particular will be the subject of the following lesson. Christ suffered, moreover, to teach us how we should sanctify ourselves in sufferings. Suffering was to be the share of all His disciples, and He wished that His example should induce them to take up their cross manfully and follow Him.

77. Q. Why did Christ live so long on earth?

A. Christ lived so long on earth to show us the way to heaven by His teachings and example.

Jesus Christ was the promised Mediator between God and man. He was to remove the wall of separation between God and man; He was to reconcile man with his God and Creator, although to accomplish this, thirty-three years were not required. Man's sin was an infinite offense; God demanded an infinite atonement. The human nature of Jesus Christ was so united to His Divinity, as to form with it but one Person; therefore every act of the God-Man in atonement of sin was an act of infinite value, sufficient to wash away sin and all its consequences. Years were not needed for that, a moment would have been sufficient. But His coming into the world was not only for the purpose of satisfying for sin, but also that the world dying to sin might begin living in Him a new life. (John iv, 14.) He was the Rock whence came the sources of living water springing up into life everlasting; He was to show man the way to heaven. He was to renew life, and how could this be done without renewing also man's understanding? Mankind had to receive from Jesus Christ a knowledge of God; all error has its origin in sin. The people had before been like sheep without shepherds, suffered to follow their own ways. (Acts xiv, 15). St. Paul tells us how, going through the streets of Athens, he passed before an altar on which was written: "To the unknown God." (Acts xvii, 23.) The wise men of the world had caught a glimpse of the divinity in the mirror of creation, but had to confess their ignorance. The mission of revealing God to us belonged to Christ. He would say: "He that seeth Me,

seeth My Father also "(John xiv, 9), for He was God, showing Himself under the form of man. By sin man had receded from God; He would bring him back to God by imparting to him a clear knowledge of God; this knowledge would produce love, and love would be the fulfilment of the Law. The road to heaven had been very smooth and easy for Adam; only one commandment had been given him; his obedience to that one commandment would have secured for him the possession of heaven. Sin, however, filled the road to heaven with thorns and briars, and made it a narrow road; sin, in a word, had placed so many obstacles in our way, that only the earnest will of man can secure the possession of the kingdom of heaven. New teachings were needed to show us how to remove these obstacles, how to do violence to ourselves in order to bear away the kingdom of heaven. Besides a clearer and fuller knowledge of God should naturally impose greater obligations; the New Law was to be more perfect than the Old; the commandments were to become henceforth a better reflexion of God's infinite holiness. Wherefore Christ lived so long on earth in order to bring about a more perfect state among men. That the world might be more docile to His voice, He first practised the lessons He would afterwards teach the world. "Jesus began to do and to teach." (Acts i, 1.) He corroborated His teachings with His own example; very unlike the teachers of the Jewish people of those times, who practised not what they preached. Christ lived so long on earth, that we might have time to undertand His teachings by the illustrations of His examples.

LESSON EIGHTH

ON OUR LORD'S PASSION, DEATH, RESURRECTION AND ASCENSION

78. *Q. What did Jesus Christ suffer?*
A. Jesus Christ suffered a bloody sweat, a cruel scourging, was crowned with thorns and was crucified.

After Our Lord had given to His disciples the strongest proof of His affection by instituting for them the Holy Eucharist, He proceeded with them to the garden of Gethsemani. Bidding the others to sit down, He took with Him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee and He began to grow sorrowful and to be sad. (Mat. xxviii, 36, 37.) He had most intensely desired to suffer for the world, and now when the hour has come He conjures His heavenly Father to let the chalice pass from Him, if it were possible. "He prays for that," says the Venerable Bede, "to show that He is truly man." What a cruel torture He must have undergone at that moment! All the sufferings He is about to endure, are distinctly before His eyes; the mockeries of the crowd, the injustice of the judges, the horrible scene of the Crucifixion. An angel is sent to strengthen and console Him, and still more to encourage Him to suffer yet more for the love of man and the glory of His Father. He begins to grow sorrowful, and to be sad at the sight of the numberless persons for whom His blood will be shed in vain, on account of the sins they will continue to commit after they have seen how the God-Man suffered for them. This sight causes Him such interior anguish, that His sweat becomes as drops of blood trickling down upon the ground. (Luke xxii, 44.) The words of the Evangelist must not be taken figuratively, as we say of one who is most sad and afflicted, that he sweats blood. Aristotle and other naturalists tell us it is not impossible for man naturally to be in such anguish of mind as to sweat blood. Sweat is the watery part of the blood after it has

all passed through the pores; anxiety and sadness can be such, as to force the blood also through the pores. This was brought about in Christ still more by His fortitude and interior resistance to His feelings of dread and sorrow. The BLOODY SWEAT of Jesus must have first soaked through His clothing, and then trickled down upon the ground. How great His anguish and grief, and all this for our sins!

Holy Scripture gives us very little information in regard to the circumstances attending the cruel scourging of Jesus Christ. St. John simply says "Pilate took Jesus and scourged Him." (John xix, 1.) St. Matthew and St. Mark say the same, and St. Luke does not mention it. What force there is in these few words: "Pilate scourged Him!" Tradition is more explicit than Scripture. This torture was inflicted on Jesus at the bidding of Pilate, before the death sentence was pronounced upon Him. It appears that Pilate did not wish to condemn Jesus to death, because he found no guilt in Him, and he thought that by producing Jesus in such a pitiable state, the fury of the Jews might be satisfied, and that by so doing he might save His life. Jesus must have been cruelly torn by the Roman soldiers of the retinue of Pilate. The Mosaic Law (Deut. xxv, 3) forbade the Jews to inflict on a criminal more than forty stripes. An ancient tradition indicates the place of the flagellation as a room in the lowest floor of a house across the street from Pilate's hall. As a rule the scourging of a criminal was done by one soldier; but for the scourging of Jesus there must have been many engaged; hence Jesus must have received a greater number of wounds, because they intended to treat Jesus more cruelly than any criminal. Jesus was most probably beaten, not with rods, which was the usual punishment for minor offenses, but with leather thongs interwoven with pieces of iron or other metals; this seems to be clear from the fact that Jesus was scourged most inhumanly by the heartless soldiers, who, of their own accord, subsequently added the frightful torture of a crown of thorns. Jesus was stripped of His upper garments, both his hands were tied to a ring fixed into a small column about half the height of the body; in a bent position He offered Himself to be scourged by the soldiers. The cruelty of this treatment in general must almost baffle description, but when it comes to the scourging

of Jesus, the sources of human wickedness must have been exhausted. Jesus, the Son of the living God, whose body was far more sensitive and delicate than that of other men, felt this torment far more keenly than any one else could have felt it. And all this for our sins, for, says the Psalmist speaking in Christ's name, "the wicked have wrought upon My back" (Ps. cxxviii, 3).

The soldiers who had scourged Him, now call together the whole band, which numbered between 400 and 600 soldiers; it may be that the whole force were not actually there; nevertheless they assembled all those that were around the tribunal. It was, indeed, delightful for the Jews to see Jesus so roughly treated, because they hated Him; but the Roman soldiers, however, were the executioners of God's justice in punishing sin in His own beloved Son; the devil was let loose among them. In the presence of this great multitude they strip Him again and put a scarlet cloak about Him; this scarlet cloak was probably a dirty old rag which they had found in the vicinity of the court-room. All this is done to mock Him. The soldiers then plat a crown of thorns, probably a variety of buckthorns, which are very common in the neighborhood of Jerusalem; and they place the crown upon His head for a royal diadem. They then put a reed in His right hand, and in mockery they bend their knee, saying: "Hail, King of the Jews." Pride and vanity were the beginning and the source of all evil; to atone for them Christ allows Himself to be so cruelly tortured in His head, and exposed Himself to the ridicule and derision of those who were a mere nothing in His sight.

With the crown of thorns on His sacred head, Jesus is again brought before Pilate, who showed Him to the crowd and said: "Behold the man!" (John xix, 5.) The weak judge thought of moving the people to compassion by that sight. But he missed his aim, for they cried out: "Crucify Him, crucify Him!" Pilate replied: "Take Him and crucify Him, because I find no cause in Him;" Pilate wanted to shift the responsibility on the Jews. For the fifth time he declared Jesus innocent. The Jews insist: "We have a law and according to that law because He made Himself the Son of God, He must die." This very naturally increased Pilate's fear. He asks the Saviour some more questions, and for the sixth time sought to re-

lease Jesus. The Jews thereupon threatened him with the enmity of Cæsar, and this was too much for the cowardly judge; he delivers Jesus to them to be crucified. What a sentence! Innocence itself sentenced to the severest punishment inflicted on the worst criminals! He had taken our sins upon Himself, and for these no punishment could be too severe. How inconceivable the love of the Master taking upon Himself the punishment due to the servant!

79. *Q. On what day did Christ die?*
A. Christ died on Good Friday.

In the days of Christ the English language was not spoken, and the day on which Christ died was not then called Good Friday; in most modern languages it is not called so to-day; but as the following question shows this appellation is very appropriate. The day on which Christ was condemned to death was called by St. John parasceve of the Pasch (John xix, 14). The parasceve, a Greek word meaning preparation, was the day preceding the Sabbath, because on that day they were to prepare everything for the next day, so that on the Sabbath, they might abstain from all work. This parasceve was one of special solemnity, because it happened that year to be the first day of the unleavened bread; that is why the Evangelist calls it the parasceve of the Pasch. There is no doubt that this day corresponded to our Friday. But from the testimony of Holy Scripture it is not so clear at what hour of the day Christ died. The day and the night were then each divided into four parts, each part consisting of three hours; the hours of the day were from 6 in the morning to 6 in the evening. From 6 to 9 was the first hour, from 9 to 12 the third hour; from 12 to 3, the sixth hour and from 3 to 6 the ninth hour. St. Mark says that Jesus was crucified at the third hour. St. John calls it about the sixth hour. In this case, as in many other instances, Scripture does not explain itself; as long as the Church of God, the infallible interpreter of the revealed word has not spoken, difference of opinion is allowed as long as it does not openly contradict Scripture. We are sure beforehand that the Evangelists do not openly contradict each other. It may be that St. Mark and St. John agree in that the third hour was not over when it was about the sixth hour; 11½ or 11¾ A. M., for instance would be about the sixth hour,

and yet could be reckoned as the third hour. Christian tradition has always held that Christ died at 3 P. M. He lived for three hours after He was nailed to the Cross. The lugubrious procession must have started for Calvary's mount quite a while before noon, judging from the incidents, which Holy Scripture attributes to that mournful journey.

80. *Q. Why do you call that day "good" on which Christ died so sorrowful a death?*

A. We call that day "good" on which Christ died, because by His death, He showed His great love for man, and purchased for him every blessing.

The whole work of our Redemption, from beginning to end, was on the part of God an act of disinterested love for man. The creation of man could not increase God's happiness, his destruction could not diminish it. Nevertheless He deigns to assume our human nature, and in that nature to suffer more than man could possibly suffer, in order to give a superabundant proof of His love for man. The most heinous crime on the part of man was the occasion for Christ to give us the most brilliant token of His love. His death on the Cross was the crown of His work. "Having loved His own," says St. John (xiii, 1), "He loved them unto the end." "To redeem the slave, the Father did not spare His own Son, and the Son did not spare Himself," says St. Bernard. The day on which Christ died was *good* indeed for us, since we were made partakers again of the greater possible good. Sin is the extreme opposite of good, it brings in its course anything but good.

On the Cross a full atonement was given for sin, the death of Christ annulled its most direful consequences. It restored to us the friendship of God, whose enemies we were; it broke the chain which made us slaves of the devil, it opened again the gates of heaven, which sin had permanently closed against us. In a word, every blessing, everything good was that day purchased for us. "Christ became poor for our sakes, that through His poverty we might be rich." (II Cor. viii, 9.) St. Paul further claims that "In Christ we have been made so rich that nothing is wanting to us in any grace." (I Cor. i, 7.) All good has come to us together with it. The day on which Christ paid the price of our ransom was for us the best of days,

for what would it have helped us to have been created, if Christ had not deigned to redeem us? No wonder the Church sings on Holy Saturday: "O happy fault, which deserved to have such and so great a Redeemer!" By the death of Christ more was gained than ever was lost by sin. Never would there have existed so close a union between the Creator and His creatures; never would man have been honored by the excessive love of his Master. The very consequences of original sin are now made occasions for greater good. The inclination to evil is an occasion for us, with God's grace, to carry on a continual warfare against ourselves, whereby we may secure greater temporal and eternal enjoyment. We should not forget, however, that although Christ has purchased for us every blessing, that most of these will not be applied to our souls without our coöperation. He created us without us, but He will not redeem us without us. His excessive love demands on the part of man a return of love, which consists, as we know from His own words, in keeping His commandments. Those who will not try to become worthy of those blessings, and to return love for love, make themselves liable to a more severe condemnation.

81. *Q. Where did Christ die?*
A. Christ died on Mount Calvary.

The place where Jesus halted, loaded with the cross, and where He was to undergo the infamous punishment of crucifixion for our salvation, was outside of the city of Jerusalem, but not far from it, about 600 feet outside of the gate, alongside of a highway very much frequented by visitors to the city. According to tradition this place was on a little elevation, in the form of a tomb. It is to be noted that none of the Evangelists call it Mount Calvary. That tomb-shaped place was not higher than 12 feet and was called Golgotha, which, according to Sts. Matthew, Mark and John, means place of Calvaria, or a skull. We do not know with certainty the origin of that appellation nor the causes that led to it. According to some the name was given because on this spot criminals were beheaded, but in that case the Evangelists would have called it the place of skulls, not of a skull. Others think that the name is derived from the form of the little hill, which was nearly like a human head, or perhaps because the place on a small eleva-

tion was not only round, but was a hard, naked and barren rock, like a bald head, or the skull of a dead man. The place at the time of Christ was outside of the walls of the city; but since the city has been extended on that side, it is now within the walls, on the spot where many centuries ago the magnificent church of the Holy Sepulchre was erected.

We must add a few words in regard to a very ancient tradition which claims that Adam had been buried on the very spot where Our Lord was crucified. St. Cyprian says: "It is believed that the skull of Adam was sprinkled with the blood of Christ; for the ancients claim that Adam was buried on the same spot, where the Cross of the Lord was raised." St. Augustine seems to have been of a different opinion. In a letter to some holy woman in Jerusalem St. Jerome says: "It is said that Adam lived and died in the city of Jerusalem, and the place where the Lord was crucified is called Calvary, because the skull of the first man there reposed, that the second Adam, with His blood trickling down from the cross, might wipe out the sins of the first Adam buried there, and that thus the word might be fulfilled: Rise thou that sleepest and arise from the dead, and Christ shall enlighten thee." Whether there is any truth in this opinion or not, it alludes to a great truth, viz: that the blood of Christ so washed and cleansed from sin the first parent of the human race, as if the drops of His blood had fallen upon Adam's skull. Conformably to that tradition, and owing to its mystical meaning, painters and sculptors place at the foot of the Crucifix a human skull; it seems, however, that this custom is not so very ancient.

82. *Q. How did Christ die?*

A. Christ was nailed to the Cross and died on it between two thieves.

No pains were spared by the heartless executioners to make Jesus die as ignominious and cruel a death, as they thought possible. Probably the cross was first raised and then Jesus nailed to it, with four large nails. Many pictures represent only three nails for the crucifixion, but it seems most likely that four nails were used. The punishment of the cross was the greatest of all punishments then inflicted; we may deduce that even from the words of Our

Lord, requiring us to take up our cross and follow Him. It was the most ignominious mode of punishment, not merely because of its publicity, but also as indicative of the low social standing of those on whom it was inflicted, such as, slaves, highwaymen; never could a Roman citizen be sentenced to die on the cross. Next, the condemned man, after having been cruelly scourged, had to carry the infamous gibbet to the place of execution. It is easy to understand, what a frightful torment it must have been to remain in that fearful position till death relieved the poor sufferer. The nails piercing hands and feet in places where many nerves meet, must cause most excruciating pains, which go on increasing as is the case with wounds that are not healed and are exposed to the air. Moreover, the suffering is aggravated at every motion of the body, however slight it may be. We might give further details; but what we have said is sufficient to show that these pains must indeed be horrible. The torment endured by our Lord was still more severe, for various reasons. His body was most tender, His organism was perfect, and His constitution was softer and more delicate; therefore He must have felt these pains far more keenly than any human being. The scourging of our Lord had been more cruel than that ever inflicted on a criminal; He had been wounded more severely than others; the stripping of His garments reopened all these wounds. They had so weakened Him, that He was unable to carry His cross; the weaker the body, the severer must have been the subsequent torments. Jesus wore the crown of thorns during His crucifixion; imagine, then, what pain He must have experienced in His sacred head. Whilst hanging on the cross, Jesus had to endure the most diabolical blasphemies and mockery of the crowd; condemned criminals usually meet with more sympathy from the spectators. The presence of His dearly beloved Mother must have pierced His heart; her sorrow was His. And what added still more to His sufferings, was the mental anguish, caused by the thought of the thousands of sinners, to whom His Passion would be fruitless. No wonder that He exclaims through the Prophet Jeremiah: "O all ye that pass by the way, attend and see, if there be any sorrow like unto My sorrow." (Lam. i, 12.)

Jesus died on the Cross between two thieves. Sts.

Matthew and Mark call them robbers, St. Luke calls them malefactors; in some countries they are called murderers, but there is nothing in Scripture to guarantee that appellation. The Jewish historian Josephus tells us that Palestine was in those days infested with highwaymen; our Lord in the parable of the good Samaritan seems to corroborate that statement. The two thieves were very likely Jews; we may infer this in regard to the obstinate robber, at least from the fact that he calls the Saviour, Christ. The crime for which they were crucified was probably sedition, the crime of which Jesus was also accused by the Jews. It apparently was an unwritten law among the Jews not to execute more than one criminal in one day, except more were guilty of the same transgression. The thief crucified on the right of Jesus gave before dying proofs of sincere repentance, and merited to hear from the lips of the dying Saviour these words: "Amen I say to thee, this day thou shalt be with Me in Paradise" (Luke xxiii, 43). The Church honors the good thief, canonized as it were by the Lord Himself, on the 24th of April. His example teaches us that, as long as there is life, there is hope and that we should never despair. The thief on the left of Jesus is the image of the hardened sinner; such a one may receive the light that makes saints of others, but he hardens his heart and dies as he has lived.

83. *Q. Why did Christ suffer and die?*
A. Christ suffered and died for our sins.

There was no necessity on the part of Christ to suffer as He actually did, because by one single act He could have fully atoned for all sins actually and possibly committed. Therefore, there must be another object of Christ's sufferings and death, besides the mere satisfaction due for sin. In the reasons we give for this, we must state that they show us rather the befittingness of Christ's sufferings and death, than their actual necessity. Christ wished to suffer for the welfare of mankind, because, as St. Thomas teaches, this was necessary on account of the end to be attained, that is, that the end could not conveniently be otherwise attained, and this for three reasons; first, because we were redeemed by His sufferings in a way most proper to us; secondly, because Christ Himself by the fearful sufferings of His Passion merited His exalted glory. "Ought

not Christ to have suffered these things, and so to enter into His glory?" (Luke xxiv, 26.) Thirdly, because the decrees of God in regard to the sufferings of Christ as related in Scripture, had to be fulfilled. (Luke xxiv, 44.) That is why St. Augustine says: "There was no more convenient way to cure our misery, than by the passion of Christ." St. Thomas confirms this with the following reasons, illustrating the first reason, we have given above.

1st, From the sufferings of Christ man realizes how dearly God loves him (Rom. v, 8), and in return he is compelled to love Him; 2nd, Jesus thereby gave us an example of obedience, humility, constancy, justice and other virtues (I Pet. ii, 12), which He practised during His passion; 3rd. By His sufferings and death He did not only fully atone for the sins of man, but He merited for him also sanctifying grace and beatific glory (Hebr. x, 19); 4th, When we consider that we have been freed from sin by the blood of Christ, we also better realize the necessity of preserving our souls free from sin (I Cor. vi, 20); 5th, The sufferings of Christ more clearly prove the dignity of man, because as man was vanquished by the devil so did man overcome the devil (I Cor. xv, 57). Christ not only suffered but died for our sins, and this also most properly, for the following reasons, given by St. Thomas: 1st, That sin might be expiated according to the strictest demands of justice, because the penalty of sin was death, and Christ suffered death in our stead; 2nd, That death might be overcome, and thereby be less terrible to us; 3rd, That Christ returning to life, might give the clearest proof of His divinity; 4th, That Christ dying bodily as the penalty of sin, might give us the example of dying spiritually to sin, as St. Paul explains in his letter to the Romans; 5th, That He might prove Himself to be a real man, and not a mere phantom, for had He, to avoid death, suddenly disappeared from the sight of men, as some heretics maintained, there would have been reason to doubt His being a real man. We might add to the reasons given by the Angelic Doctor a sixth reason, viz: that by dying He might thus give us the greatest testimony of His love; for "Greater love than this no man hath, than that a man lay down his life for his friends" (John xv, 13). In

Christ this love was all the more generous, as He died not for His friends, but for His enemies.

84. *Q. What lessons do we learn from the sufferings and death of Christ?*

A. From the sufferings and death of Christ we learn the great evil of sin; the hatred God bears to it, and the necessity of satisfying for it.

The first great lesson that we are to learn from the sufferings and death of Christ is the great evil of sin. The enormity of one single mortal sin could not be more clearly deduced than from the sufferings and death of Christ, viz: from the way the all-just and all-merciful God punishes it. The eternal pains of hell show what a mortal sin is; God abandons forever a soul departing this life stained with a mortal sin, were it only a sin of thought. But even the pains of hell are but a shadow compared with the punishment, which an infinitely just God inflicted for it on Calvary. In hell God punishes the obstinate servant who presumptuously revolted against Him, but on Calvary He exacts a most terrible satisfaction from His only-begotten, most holy, most innocent and most dearly beloved Son, and this for the sins of others, showing thereby that the offense sin does to God is of such a nature, that it cannot be fully compensated except by a divine Person, equal to Himself. If we wish to know how great an evil sin is, we will learn it by going in thought to the place where Jesus died. Recognize, O man, how grievous the wounds are, for which it was necessary that Christ the Lord should be wounded and die!

The second lesson which we are to learn from the sufferings and death of Christ is the hatred God bears to sin. Hatred is the opposite of love. God cannot love what is not good, and as sin is the absence of all good, God necessarily bears to it an eternal hatred. This was clearly shown in the Passion of His Son. Christ "was wounded for our iniquities, He was bruised for our sins" (Is. liii, 5). Christ therefore was treated as sinful man deserved to be treated for his sins. God visited in His dearly beloved Son the sins of man. He allows His public life to be preceded by thirty years of sufferings, trials and privations. During His Passion, the Father seemed almost to

abandon Him. In the garden Jesus prays that the chalice may if possible, be taken away from Him; far from granting His prayer, He, the heavenly Father, has still more painful sufferings in store for Him. He allows Him to undergo all the torments we have partly described in the preceding pages. Before expiring on the cross, the Saviour cried out with a loud voice: "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" (Mark xv, 34.) Sin was being punished in Him, and therefore does the eternal Father allow His divine Son to drink to the very dregs the chalice of His Passion. Sin is the greatest of evils, in fact, nothing but evil, therefore God necessarily bears to it the deepest hatred.

The third lesson which we are to learn from the sufferings and death of Christ is the necessity of satisfying for sin. One of the great doctrinal differences between the Catholics and Protestants is the necessity of satisfaction for sin. We will have occasion when explaining one of the parts of the Sacrament of Penance, to show more clearly the absurdity of this Protestant tenet. Luther, Calvin, and other so-called Reformers, attempt to prove from Scripture that Christ having fully satisfied for our sins, there is no further necessity on the part of man to satisfy for them. Christ Himself bore our sins in His body upon the tree. (I Pet. ii, 24.) He paid, we agree, a sufficient price to blot out all the sins of all men; but this price will not benefit any one, except it be in some way applied to him. Were not this application required why are there so many wicked people in the world, why are so many sentenced to hell, why are the elect comparatively so few, what need would there be of Baptism, of the Eucharist, of faith, of penance, of prayer or of the preaching of the Gospel? But it is by these means that the merits of Christ's death are to be applied to each man individually. Christ has by His sufferings and death reconciled man with God; from enemies that we were He made us friends of God. The Catholic Church teaches us that we were reconciled with God gratuitously by the merits of Jesus Christ; but this reconciliation does not take away generally all punishment due to sin. We can never fully compensate the injury done to God by sin, but we must at least try to satisfy for it in as far as we are able and God demands; and in this we should be encouraged by the example of

Christ. On beholding Christ, in atonement for my sins, suffering such cruel torments, I will consider no cross too heavy, no mortifications too great, if I, a vile earth-worm must satisfy for my own sins as far as I am able.

85. *Q. Whither did Christ's soul go after His death?* A. After Christ's death His soul descended into hell.

After its separation from the body the soul of Christ descended into hell. The Evangelists do not mention this fact, but it is clear from the Apostles' Creed. At the death of Christ on the cross His soul separated from His body, but both body and soul remained united with the Divinity, so that the body and soul, although in different places, united to the Divinity, remained one and the same divine Person as before. The same Person was by His Divinity everywhere, whilst His body was in the grave and His soul in Limbo. The descent into hell, no more than His Incarnation or Death, brought any change in His Divinity; He is ever the same immutable God. The hell into which Christ descended was not the hell of the damned, as the following question will tell us. There must be, then, more than one place, to which the same name is applied. Before Christ there were four places where for a time or forever the deceased were deprived of the beatific vision. 1st, The hell of the damned, where those who have departed this life with a mortal sin on their conscience will suffer forever; and it is this place which is now commonly called hell. 2nd, The dwelling place of those who die stained only with original sin, such as, unbaptized infants. It is sure that as they have no actual mortal sin, they are not in the hell of the damned, or at least do not suffer the pains of the damned; whilst, on the other hand, it is certain from the testimony of Christ Himself, that they cannot enter the kingdom of heaven; there must be, then, a place provided for them, to which the name of hell would be improperly applied. 3rd, Purgatory, or the place where souls satisfy for venial sins or for the temporal punishment due for forgiven mortal sins. 4th, The hell, or Limbo, where before the coming of Christ the souls of the Patriarchs and the other just were detained, awaiting the coming of Christ for their deliverance. Hence when we say that Christ's soul descended into hell, we know that the last mentioned place is meant thereby. A difficult question to solve would

be where this place actually was, or where hell is. The Catechism says that His soul descended into hell, borrowing these words from the Apostles' Creed. It is therefore generally supposed that hell is in the bowels of the earth; this is not, however, an article of faith. To attempt to prove that it could not be where Scripture and the Holy Fathers seem to place it, is absurd. No geological experiment has so far been made, nor, we may safely argue, will ever be made, from which we could logically conclude that no such place can exist in the bowels of the earth. The deepest hole ever made in the earth by the hand of man, is no proof of the contrary. Whilst, therefore, the Church leaves us free to argue this question, yet as no resources are at hand to settle it out in the ordinary scientific way, it is safest to believe what our forefathers have always believed, since science cannot prove anything against such a belief.

86. *Q. Did Christ's soul descend into the hell of the damned?*

A. The hell into which Christ's soul descended was not the hell of the damned, but a place or state of rest called Limbo, where the souls of the just were waiting for Him.

The hell into which Christ descended is called Limbo. It is not easy to establish the origin of that word as meaning the place of rest, where the just before Christ were detained. The word is never used in Holy Scripture. The words used in Scripture are: Paradise, this is what Christ called it, when He said to the good thief: "This day thou shalt be with Me in Paradise." St. Peter (I, iii, 19) calls it a prison. In the Parable of the Rich man and Lazarus (Luke xvi, 22) it is called Abraham's bosom. Catholic theologians have always held two Limbos, the Limbo of the children and the Limbo of the Fathers, to signify the second and the fourth of the places, mentioned in the preceding question. Limbo means border; it may be that since the ancients located the place in question in the vicinity of hell, the name of border, or Limbo has been applied to it. The presence of Christ made of the place a Paradise. The Catechism calls it a place of rest. St. Luke says that Lazarus was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom. St. Augustine to the question, what is meant by Abraham's bosom, answers: "A place of rest, in which after death

were and are now received all the followers of the piety of Abraham; before Christ it was the Limbo of the Fathers, and after Christ it is heaven, or the Paradise of the Blessed." So does the Church sing every year on the feast of St. Martin: "Martin was with joy received in Abraham's bosom." The faithful and the Saints are called and are indeed children of Abraham, who first excelled in faith and holiness; in Limbo he must have been the first of all. As children rest in the laps of their parents, so does this Scriptural expression denote a state of rest for those who were detained there. In his first epistle St. Peter calls it a prison, and very appropriately. These souls were awaiting most anxiously the coming of Him, in whom they had believed, who had been promised to them almost immediately after the fall of the first man and woman. How painful it must have been to them to be deprived of the beatific vision! Sin had closed heaven to them. Their feelings must have been like those of the poor souls in Purgatory. They know their God, they desire most ardently to be admitted to see and enjoy Him, but they are in prison; until they are released, they shall not have that happiness. They have seen their God at the time they rendered the account of their stewardship; they are, with a holy impatience, awaiting to see and enjoy Him forever.

87. *Q. Why did Christ descend into Limbo?*

A. Christ descended into Limbo to preach to the souls who were in prison, that is, to announce to them the joyful tidings of their redemption.

This answer is substantially taken from I Peter iii, 19. "Christ (after His death) . . . in the spirit, in which also coming He preached to those spirits who were in prison." St. Peter restricts the preaching of Christ to those spirits, "which had been some time incredulous," when they waited for the patience of God in the days of Noah. Of those who died in the waters of the deluge, a great many must have been saved from eternal death, as otherwise Christ could not have brought them any joyful tidings, for out of hell there is no redemption. They remained obstinate whilst Noah was building the Ark, but before drowning they must have returned to God by a sincere repentance. St. Peter speaks of these only, as the example of all those who were detained in prison, and were to be freed by Christ,

and this for two reasons; 1st, Because never did such a number of people perish at the same time and were sentenced to hell, and because this offered a natural transition to the Apostle to speak of Baptism, of which the ark of Noah was a figure; 2nd, Because the salutary efficacy of the death of Christ is shown forth especially in freeing those ancient and famous sinners, who had perished in the deluge, and whom the Jews thought altogether excluded from the fruits of the Redemption. The joyful tidings, however, were not limited to them, but were brought to all those who believed in His coming and kept His commandments during their life on earth. He granted them the beatific vision and even caused the bodies of many of them to rise out of their graves (Mat. xxvii, 52).

Holy Scripture does not tell us how long the soul of Christ remained in Limbo; it is most probable that the soul of Christ remained there until it was again reunited with His body early on Sunday morning.

St. Thomas gives three reasons for the descent of Christ into hell. 1st, That He should fully undergo and expiate the pains of our sins, among which were death, and after death condemnation to hell; 2nd, That after having vanquished the devil by His passion, He should rescue from him the prisoners who were detained in hell; 3rd, That, as He had shown upon earth His power by His life and His death, He should show His power also to those that were in hell by visiting and enlightening them, in order that every knee might bend in heaven, on earth and in hell.

88. *Q. Where was Christ's body while His soul was in Limbo?*

A. While Christ's soul was in Limbo, His body was in the Holy Sepulchre.

Towards evening of Good Friday a rich man named Joseph of Arimathea, a city of Judea, who probably belonged to the Sanhedrin, but who had not consented to the counsel and doings of His colleagues, and had defended Jesus, "went in boldly to Pilate and demanded the body of Jesus" (Luke xxiii, 51). For the criminals that were crucified the Roman law provided no other grave than the gibbet to which they were fastened, leaving the elements and the vultures to achieve the work of destruction. According to

the Jewish law the crucified criminals were to be buried, but they could not be taken down from the cross without the previous consent of the judge. Pilate wondered, when Joseph begged that favor, that Jesus should be already dead. To make sure, he sent for the centurion, and on his testimony that He was dead, he granted Joseph's request to take the body of Jesus down from the Cross. This must have been about 4 or 5 o'clock in the afternoon. The Blessed Mother with St. John and the holy women stood at the foot of the cross. The Mother of Sorrows received the lifeless body of her divine Son into her arms. The body was then likely washed, bound in linen cloths with a mixture of myrrh and aloes spread over it, and made ready for burial, as was the custom of the Jews to bury. There are two great reasons, why Jesus wished to be buried. 1st, Because He wished to conform Himself to the traditions of the Jews; 2nd, Because it was proper that after Jesus had suffered all sorts of ignominy during His passion, He should be buried, because to be deprived of burial was considered among the Jews as the greatest disgrace. St. Thomas adds three other reasons: 1st, Because by His burial, His real death and His real resurrection would be better proved; 2nd, Because Christ by rising from the grave, would increase the hope of resurrection in those who are in their graves; 3rd, Because the burial of Christ was to be a figure of our spiritual burial in Baptism.

The Body of Jesus, having been duly disposed for burial, was then carried in procession to a garden belonging to Joseph, close to Calvary. God willed that, not the Apostles, but Joseph and Nicodemus should bury Christ's Sacred Body, that the Jews might have all the less pretexts for doubting His resurrection. The grave of Jesus had never been used before; Joseph had it cut out of the rock for himself, or the members of his family. It was cut out in the form of a horizontal cave; it was very low, because as St. John tells us, He had to stoop down to look in. It was about 6 feet long by 3 feet wide. A big stone closed the entrance. The Jews, to make sure that the Apostles should not carry Him away, and give out to the people that He was risen from the dead, sealed the stone and, besides, placed a guard to watch the sepulchre.

89. *Q. On what day did Christ rise from the dead?*
A. Christ rose from the dead, glorious and immortal, on Easter Sunday, the third day after His death.

The Catechism here treats of the resurrection of Christ, which is to us an article of faith of special importance. The resurrection of Christ consists in this, that His soul, after His death, was again united with the same body, from which it had been separated through death, and that thus Christ as man rose from death to life again. We say that this dogma is of special importance, because it is the foundation of our faith; it is an explicit testimony that God accepted the atonement of Christ, and that our Redemption through Christ's passion and death was really consummated. It is the foundation of our faith, because Christ had often predicted it, and had proposed it expressly and in a particular manner as a proof of the truth of His mission and doctrine. He told His hearers that a sign would be given, and this sign was His resurrection (Mat. 12: 39). St. Paul even writes (1 Cor. 15: 14): "If Christ be not risen again, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain." It is also a clear proof of our Redemption; because death is the punishment of sin, and consequently when Christ, who had taken our sins upon Himself and had expiated them by His death, rose again, it was clearly shown that God had forgiven sin, which was the cause of death.

We believe in the resurrection of Christ, because it is taught us in the Apostles' Creed. But besides being a dogma of faith, it is an historical fact resting on such convincing proofs, that its truth cannot be reasonably contested. It rests on the testimony of the Apostles and the Evangelists, who knew the fact they related, who had no desire of deceiving us, and who could not have deceived, had they wished to do so. First, they knew what they were speaking about. They had seen Christ alive after His resurrection, and had heard Him not once but many times, not then alone, but in company with many others. They were not light-minded people, but rather unreasonably incredulous. They had not expected it, because they had not understood the prophecy of the Saviour. Not only did they not believe the women who had seen Him, but they even doubted when they saw Him with their own eyes.

St. Thomas was the most incredulous among them. Secondly, the Apostles had no desire of deceiving us, because, in fact, it would not have benefited them to deceive us. Their deception would have earned them misery in this world and eternal pain in the next. Hatred, persecution, prison and death would have been their share in this world. God besides would have punished them with the eternal pains of hell for their abominable deception. And yet the Apostles were not afraid to preach Jesus, risen from the dead, to Jew and Heathen; the most violent persecutions frightened them not, they even sacrificed their lives to confirm their testimony. Their very enemies were convinced of their sincerity. Had they preached falsehood, it was an easy matter for the Jews to convict them and have them punished as deceivers and impostors. But this they could not do, hence they simply forbade them to preach. But supposing the Apostles had desired to deceive us, they would have found it impossible. The Jews would certainly not have believed them, if Christ's body had still been in the grave, or if the Apostles had taken it away. In the first case, they could have seen Christ's body with their own eyes, and in the second, a judicial enquiry would surely have brought to light the deceit of the Apostles. There is then no fact more convincingly proved in history than the resurrection of Christ.

The Catechism besides tells us, how Christ rose, viz: glorious and immortal. We will have occasion in the last question of the Catechism to explain the qualities of a glorified body. Suffice it here to say that the glorified body of Christ possessed those qualities in a supereminent degree.

The Catechism adds that Christ rose on Easter Sunday, the third day after His death. Holy Scripture does not exactly tell us at what hour of the day Christ rose. Although Scripture does not mention it, the soldiers on watch must have been the first to see that the dead Body of Christ was no longer in the grave; it greatly frightened them to see an angel rolling away the heavy stone that enclosed the tomb. The holy women went to the grave as soon as they were allowed to leave their houses, and came to the tomb shortly after the sun had risen, when they saw that the Body of Jesus was not there. The Evangelists say it was the first day after the Sabbath, or the first day of the

week, which corresponds to our Sunday. Christ rose from the dead early in the morning, the third day after His death. To commemorate continually that glorious and wonderful event, the Church, inspired by the Holy Ghost, ordered that in future the Sunday should be kept as the Lord's day. In honor of the number of hours our divine Saviour's body remained in the grave, the Church has instituted what is known as the "Devotion of the Forty Hours."

90. *Q. How long did Christ stay on earth after His resurrection?*

A. Christ stayed on earth forty days after His resurrection to show that He was truly risen from the dead, and to instruct His Apostles.

Forty days will elapse from the day He arose glorious and immortal from the dead, before Christ will introduce His Sacred Humanity into heaven. As the Catechism says, He remained that long upon earth for a twofold purpose; 1st, To show that He was truly risen from the dead; 2nd, To instruct His apostles.

It was necessary that the resurrection of Christ should be so clearly proven, as not to leave any occasion for reasonable doubt. Those whom He left to continue His work should have every opportunity to convince themselves of the fact. The resurrection was to be the great irrefragable proof of His divine Mission; it had, therefore, to be most clearly established. His subsequent apparitions were destined to show that His glorified Body was a real Body, the same in which He had suffered for us, the same He had prophesied would rise from the dead.

Benedict XIV is of the opinion, shared by many other great writers, that the risen Saviour must have first appeared to His Mother, although Scripture does not mention the fact.

The first apparition recorded was to Mary Magdalen, from whom our Lord had ejected the seven devils. Mary stood near the Sepulchre weeping, and saw two angels sitting in the grave. They questioned her why she wept; she replied: "Because they have taken away my Lord" (John 20:11). Turning back she saw a man, whom she mistook for the gardener. When Jesus called her by her name, she at once recognized Him, and He told her to in-

form the Apostles of His resurrection. He had died to expiate sin, and He deigned to appear to those that had been great sinners first, and were to be one day great saints, because He had taken away their sins. Jesus next appeared to the holy women. On their return from the grave to tell the Apostles what they had seen, Jesus met them and said: "All Hail." They at once recognized Jesus and adored Him. From St. Luke (24:34) we learn that the Saviour next appeared to Peter; for when the disciples of Emmaus reported what had occurred to them, they said: "The Lord is risen indeed and hath appeared to Simon." Next we find the Saviour accompanying two men on their way to Emmaus who at first did not recognize Him, but who constrained Him to stay with them that evening; they found out that it was the Lord when He was at table with them.

On the very day of His resurrection in the evening He appeared also to the Apostles who were gathered in the cenacle, or Supper-room, for fear of the Jews. Thomas was not with them. Jesus entered and stood in their midst and said: "Peace be to you." He upbraided them with their incredulity, because they had not believed those who reported His resurrection. He showed them His hands and His side. But still there was a doubt in their minds. He asked them: "Have you anything to eat?" They offered Him a piece of broiled fish and honeycomb, which He ate in their presence. Eight days later Jesus appeared to them, this time Thomas was with them. To dispel all doubt from the mind of the incredulous Apostle, He told him to put his finger in His hand and his hand in His side, and not to be faithless but believing. After this Jesus showed Himself again to the disciples at the sea of Tiberias (John 21). For the eighth time Jesus showed Himself to 500 persons on a mountain of Galilee, probably on the Thabor. Lastly, He appeared to the disciples again on the day of His glorious Ascension at Jerusalem, probably in the cenacle, where He ate with them, and told them to prepare for the coming of the Holy Ghost. The first object of His forty days' stay upon earth was now attained; His resurrection from the dead was fully established to the satisfaction of the most incredulous.

The second purpose of His stay was to instruct His Apostles. St. John winds up the last Chapter of His Gospel with

these words: "There are also many other things which Jesus did, which if they were written every one, the world itself, I think, would not be able to contain the books that should be written." We may deduct therefrom that Jesus did and said a great many things, which are not recorded in Scripture. Most of this constitutes the deposit of Christian Tradition. There are, however, a few essentials of Religion, which Jesus established and about which He instructed the Apostles during these forty days. There is, first, the Institution of the Sacrament of Penance, as related in St. John. Secondly, the conferring of the primacy of honor and jurisdiction on St. Peter in words so clear as to leave no occasion to doubt their meaning. Finally, at this apparition on the mountain of Galilee, He conferred upon them their apostolic mission. He must have also instructed His Apostles in regard to the unbloody Sacrifice of the New Law, the administration of the Sacraments, the government of His Church; so that before ascending into heaven, He left His Church perfectly organized, and with her, as constituted by Him, He promised to remain forever.

91. *Q. After Christ had remained forty days on earth whither did He go?*

A. After forty days Christ ascended into heaven, and the day on which He ascended into heaven is called Ascension day.

Christ ascended into heaven not as God, but as man, since it was as man that he died, was buried and rose again from the dead. For, as God, He always was and is in heaven, on earth and everywhere, and could not, therefore, move from one place to another; because this would imply a defect contrary to His immensity, and be a denial that He is always everywhere. But as man, He ascended into heaven, that is, the human soul and the human body of Christ left this world to enter into heaven. Jesus did not then commence to enjoy the happiness of heaven, because He enjoyed already the beatific vision from the first moment of His Incarnation; He received the glorification of His body on the day of His resurrection. Why did not Christ remain upon earth? Because the earth in its present state is not the proper place for a glorified body, since death still reigns in this world. Christ ascended into heaven the fortieth day after His resurrection, that is, on

a Thursday, probably on the fifth of May, as it is generally admitted that He died on the 25th of March. The place whence He ascended into heaven is not, as several Protestant writers hold, the village of Bethany, but the summit of the Mount of Olives, which is on the way from Jerusalem to Bethany.

¶ Besides the eleven Apostles, there were several other witnesses, many of the 72 disciples, of the pious women, who had followed Jesus from Galilee, and, above all, His holy Mother. Very likely there were about 120 persons, the same number that took part a little later in the election of St. Matthias. Before departing from them, the Saviour lifting up His hands blessed them. Judging from the impression of His feet left on the rock, many conclude that Jesus had His face turned towards the northwest, Rome and the heathen countries. As Jesus slowly rose up to heaven, a cloud received Him out of the sight of the Apostles. ¶ Christ had told them: "It is expedient to you that I go" (John 16:7). St. Thomas teaches us accordingly, that it was proper that Christ should ascend into heaven, and that it is more useful to us, than if He should have remained with us on earth, especially because our faith and our hope may thereby be the better tried. Christ ascended into heaven on the day which is now called Ascension day, one of the holydays of obligation in the Catholic Church.

92. *Q. Where is Christ in heaven?*

A. In heaven Christ sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty.

The question proposed by the Catechism is not: Where is Christ Now? but where is Christ in heaven. Faith teaches us that the presence of the human soul and the human body of Christ is not limited to heaven only, because we know that Christ as man is present in thousands and thousands of places on earth, wherever the Blessed Sacrament is kept. The Catechism does not mention here the presence of Christ in the Blessed Sacrament, because Christ is not present there in a visible and natural manner; His body is present there without its natural extension, and without being the object of the senses. The Catechism here asks where Christ is in heaven, and the answer to that question is taken from the Apostles' Creed. "He sitteth at the right

hand of God the Father Almighty." A question that suggests itself is why the Apostles say: Christ *sits*. Sitting indicates a position of rest. By His work on earth He merited that rest, His humility and His obedience won for Him the greatest honor. Christ promises a similar reward to all those that shall have overcome; He will give them to sit with Him on His throne. He sits at the right hand of God. This is a metaphorical expression, which cannot be taken in its obvious meaning, as the next question will show us. Among civilized nations the place at the right hand of the host has always been taken to be the most honorable. So when the mother of the sons of Zebedee requested our Lord that He might give them to sit, the one at His right hand and the other at His left in His kingdom, she meant that the two first places might be given to them. The highest place in heaven was assigned to Christ as man.

93. *Q. What do you mean by saying that Christ sits at the right hand of God?*

A. When I say that Christ sits at the right hand of God, I mean that Christ as God is equal to His Father in all things, and that as man He is in the highest place in heaven next to God.

We have proved (see Questions 25 and 63) that Jesus Christ is true God, and as such He must be equal to His Father, because in the three divine Persons there can be no other difference than the relation they bear to one another. Apart from that difference, they are equal in all things. It would not therefore be sound doctrine to say that Jesus Christ occupies in heaven the place next to God; because His divine and human nature being hypostatically united in one person, giving Him the second place would be making the second Person of the Blessed Trinity less than the Father, which is heretical. The human nature of Jesus Christ is not of itself God, it did not exist from all eternity; His humanity is not equal to the divinity; it is a creature, therefore inferior to God; but because the Son in becoming man united His humanity hypostatically with His divinity in one and the same Person, it is evident that of all creatures the human body and soul of Christ must occupy the highest place in heaven. This is further explained by what the Church teaches in regard to the adoration we owe to Jesus Christ; His human nature hypostatically united to the

Word must be adored with the same absolute act of worship as the divinity of the Word. Between the adoration of Christ as God and of Christ as man, there is no difference as to the formal object of worship, but there is a difference as to the material object. We adore the humanity of Christ directly, immediately, not however for itself but because of the hypostatic union.

LESSON NINTH

ON THE HOLY GHOST AND HIS DESCENT UPON THE APOSTLES

94. *Q. Who is the Holy Ghost?*
A. The Holy Ghost is the third Person of the Blessed Trinity.

This answer was explained in answer to Question 26.

95. *Q. From whom does the Holy Ghost proceed?*
A. The Holy Ghost proceeds from the Father and the Son.

The admission of this article of faith has been the great stumbling-block of the Greek schismatics. They first denied that the Holy Ghost proceeded from the Father and the Son, and also contended that the Catholics had not rightfully added to the Nicene Creed the word *Filioque,* "and from the Son." The first heresy originated probably in the fourth century, and was in the following centuries revived by different parties. The Nicene Creed is more explicit than the Apostles' Creed, for the simple reason that the Apostles did not deem it necessary to condemn errors, which did not then exist. In the Catholic Church there are no new articles of faith; although the infallibility of the Pope was proclaimed a dogma of faith only by Pius IX, in 1870, it was not previously an unknown truth, but it had been the belief of even the first Christians; error and heresy, however, did not then call for a solemn proclamation of that doctrine. So also in the beginning, the Catholic Church was not so explicit in regard to the Procession of the Holy Ghost. In the Apostles' Creed there is no mention made of the Procession of the Holy Ghost, neither in the Nicene Creed. In the first Council of Constantinople the Fathers added to the Nicene Creed "who proceeded from the Father;" they did not deny His Procession from the Son also, but as they were condemning the heresy of Macedonius, who claimed that the Holy Ghost proceeded from the Son only and that He was a

creature, the first addition was deemed sufficient. Subsequently His Procession from the Son was denied, and the *Filioque* was added. The Blessed Trinity is a mystery so sublime, that it is difficult to express and to explain doctrines, which we know to be absolutely true on the authority of God Himself. Four Ecumenical Councils of the Church have declared that the Holy Ghost proceeds from all eternity from the Father and the Son as from one and the same source.

The following texts show that it is so. Christ speaking of the Holy Ghost said: "He shall glorify Me, because He shall receive of Mine and shall show it to you. All things whatsoever the Father hath are Mine. Therefore I said that He shall receive of Mine and show it to you." (John xvi, 14.) Again St. Paul says: "God hath sent the Spirit of His Son." (Gal. iv, 6.) Ancient tradition which is the word of God as well as Scripture, is clear on that subject, even among the Greeks. We will give only the testimony of one of the Fathers, St. Epiphanius, who says: "The Holy Ghost proceeding from the Father and receiving from the Son, not different from the Father and the Son, but of the same substance and the same divinity. The Father and the Son are one and the same source, from which the Holy Ghost proceeds, because in God all is one, where there is not the difference of relation constituting the three divine Persons." In the Ecumenical Council of Florence, a definition was issued signed by both the Greek and the Latin Fathers to the effect that the word *Filioque* had been lawfully and reasonably added to the Creed, as it is now in the Creed said at Mass. At the Council of Florence in 1439 the Greeks signed that decree but shortly afterwards they returned to the old vomit; the Greek Church for the last four hundred years has opposed the addition of the *Filioque* to the Creed. The words of St. Gregory of Naziance apply forcibly to them, as they did at the time they were uttered: "If we have to believe so, why should we not say so?"

96. *Q. Is the Holy Ghost equal to the Father and the Son?*

A. The Holy Ghost is equal to the Father and the Son, being the same Lord and God as they are.

We have seen (question 28) that the three Divine Per-

sons are equal in all things; it follows thence that the Holy Ghost must be equal to the Father and the Son. The question, however, seems quite natural, since the one to whom we assign the third place on earth is considered, under one or the other respect, less than those who precede him. Not so, however, with the Persons of the Blessed Trinity, they being, as the Catechism says, one and the same Lord and God. If there were in one man two persons, they would be naturally equally wise and powerful, because they would have one and the same soul and body: consequently, whereas, there are in God three Persons, having one and the same nature, they must possess the same perfections and be equal in all things.

97. *Q. On what day did the Holy Ghost come down upon the Apostles?*

A. The Holy Ghost came down upon the Apostles ten days after the Ascension of our Lord, and the day on which He came down upon the Apostles is called Whitsunday or Pentecost.

After the glorious Ascension of Christ the Apostles and the disciples returned to Jerusalem, and to the number of about 120 they retired to the Cenacle and persevered in prayer with Mary, the Mother of Jesus. They prepared themselves by nine days of retirement and prayer for the coming of the Holy Ghost. The tenth day after the Ascension was the great feast of Pentecost. Pentecost is a Greek word meaning fiftieth, it being the fiftieth day after Easter. Pentecost was one of the great feast days among the Jews. Easter, Pentecost and the feast of the Tabernacles were their three principal solemnities. They observed Pentecost in commemoration of the promulgation of the divine law on Mount Sinah, fifty days after their departure from the land of bondage; they were then to offer an oblation of their first corn, which had been gathered. Why did the Holy Ghost come down upon the Apostles on that day? Besides other reasons, there is especially one which we should notice. The Old Law had been promulgated by Moses to a great multitude of people; it was proper that the New Law should be promulgated in Jerusalem at the time when many faithful followers of the law of Moses were gathered within its walls. All male adults living in Palestine had to appear that day before the Lord God in the

temple of Jerusalem; the women and children as also the Jews who lived outside of Palestine had come in crowds. When Peter, the chief of the Apostles, was to preach that day for the first time the law of Christ, people of diverse tongues would be his listeners, and numbers of them would believe in Him whom their people had nailed to the cross. How could the Holy Ghost come down upon the Apostles since He was already with them? The Holy Ghost, being God, is indeed, present everywhere, for He is omnipotent by His nature and power. By His power He preserves all created beings and enables them to do that to which they are destined by their nature. But besides this continual conservation and coöperation, He can by His power come to a place or to a person, by working in it or in him in a new manner. Hence it follows that the Holy Ghost comes to us only by beginning to operate in us in a new way, and that He actually comes to us when He begins to act in us in a special manner. When, therefore, the Catechism says that the Holy Ghost came down upon the Apostles, we must not thence infer, that He was not with them before. Christ had said of them at the last supper that they were clean of heart; hence the Holy Ghost was with them through sanctifying grace and also through actual grace. But on the day of Pentecost the Holy Ghost began to work in the Apostles wonderful effects not included in the grace of preservation and coöperation; that is why the Holy Ghost is said to have come down upon the Apostles. The day on which He came down is also called Whitsunday; this name reminds us of an ancient Catholic custom. As on Holy Saturday baptismal water is solemnly blessed by the ministers of the Church, so also is it blessed on Pentecost eve, after which solemn Baptism was anciently conferred on the catechumens, who had been duly prepared. The newly baptized then put on white garments indicating the purity of soul conferred on them by Baptism; this led to calling the Sunday on which they appeared in white attire — Whitsunday.

98. *Q. How did the Holy Ghost come down upon the Apostles?*

A. The Holy Ghost came down upon the Apostles in the form of tongues of fire.

St. Luke narrates in the Acts the coming of the Holy

Ghost in the following words: "And when the days of the pentecost were accomplished, they were all together in one place: and suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a mighty wind coming, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting; and there appeared to them parted tongues as it were of fire, and it sat upon every one of them; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they began to speak with divers tongues, according as the Holy Ghost gave them to speak." (Acts ii, 1–4.)

Why did the Holy Ghost come down upon the Apostles in the form of tongues, and why were these tongues of fire? The Holy Ghost appeared in different figures according to the difference of His operations and their meaning. At the Baptism of Christ He appeared in the form of a dove, to signify baptismal innocence. At the Transfiguration of Christ He appeared in the form of a resplendent cloud, to signify the dew of His doctrine and His protection over the faithful. (Mat. xvii, 5.) In the Cenacle Christ gave the Holy Ghost to the Apostles in the form of breathing, when He breathed on them and said: "Receive ye the Holy Ghost." On Pentecost day the Holy Ghost came down in the form of tongues of fire to signify an operation far different from the three preceding. He came down in the form of tongues, because He then made the Apostles fit preachers of the Gospel; the instrument of preaching is the tongue. The tongues signified the gift of languages. The tongues again signified perfect wisdom, and the knowledge of all that concerned faith and the sublime mysteries which they were destined to preach. The tongues were not human tongues of flesh, but tongues as of fire; they were not of fire, but looked like fire. This signifies, first, that God, and especially the Holy Ghost, is love itself. Again as the Old Law had been given on Mount Sinah amid claps of thunder and flashes of lightning when the mountain seemed on fire and was covered with smoke, so also did a sound as of a mighty wind accompanied with fire precede the coming of the Holy Ghost, to denote that the Giver of both Laws is the same God who could according to His good pleasure, abrogate the Old Law and substitute the New Law in its stead. Thirdly, to signify that the law of Christ, which was about to be promulgated, is a law of fire, that is, of intense charity and great zeal. Fourthly, the fiery tongues were to signify the effect produced in the

minds and hearts of the Apostles and of the faithful by the working of the Holy Ghost. The Apostles first were to be enkindled with the fire of love, that they in turn might dispel torpor and coldness from the hearts of the faithful and enkindle in them the fire of divine love. The gift of languages was given to the Apostles for the benefit of others. Christian tradition, moreover, has always held that on Pentecost day the Apostles were confirmed in grace; this was for them the greatest possible personal benefit. They received on that day the fulness of the Holy Ghost. The faithful in the sacrament of Confirmation are strengthened and filled with the Holy Ghost, but not in the same measure as the Apostles. They do not receive the gift of languages nor the confirmation in grace, as these are extraordinary effects of the coming of the Holy Ghost which the Apostles needed to carry out worthily and successfully their mission of preaching the Gospel to all nations.

99. *Q. Who sent the Holy Ghost upon the Apostles?* A. Our Lord Jesus Christ sent the Holy Ghost upon the Apostles.

To understand this rightly, we must first consider what theologians call *mission* or sending, as applied to the divine Persons. Mission or sending is the proceeding of one Person from another with a special relation to a temporary effect. Two things are therefore necessary, first, the proceeding of the Person sent from the Person sending, and secondly, a certain outward working of the former; this working is temporal, or occurring in time, whilst the proceeding of one Person from another is eternal. Christ expressed this when He said: "From God I proceeded and came, for I came not of Myself, but He sent Me." (John viii, 42.) From God He proceeded before time existed, and He came on earth in time to redeem mankind. The Father, as He proceeds from no one, is not sent. The Son is sent by the Father, from whom He proceeds, and the Holy Ghost is sent by the Father and the Son, for He proceeds from Them. There is also a twofold mission, viz: visible and invisible. A visible mission was the sending of the Son at the time of His Incarnation; and also the sending of the Holy Ghost at the baptism of Christ and on Pentecost day. The invisible mission is the sending of which Scripture generally speaks, as when St. Paul says:

"God hath sent the Spirit of His Son." (Gal. iv, 6.) A visible mission, as is clear from the instances given above, consists in an effect appearing to the senses, and representing the Person, who is sent, whether the divine Person assumes the nature of a creature, as in the Incarnation, or a visible appearance is used only to signify the interior sanctification, operated by the Person sent, as when the Holy Ghost appeared under the form of tongues of fire upon the Apostles. The invisible mission consists in a spiritual and invisible effect such as justification or sanctification. In the visible mission one Person is sent and manifested without the other; in the invisible mission both the proceeding Persons are sent. Although the Father is not sent, because He does not proceed from any one, yet He comes and communicates Himself to the soul as Christ testifies: "If any one love Me . . . My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our abode with him." (John xiv, 23.) We should however, not infer from the fact that a Person is sent, that He is less than the Person who sent Him. It would, indeed, be impossible to illustrate this by an example. Suffice it to say that one may be sent in three different ways, viz: by way of command, like a servant is sent by his master; by way of advice, like a patient is sent to the health resort by a doctor; or by way of origin, as light is sent forth by the sun. This last example, after clearing it of all imperfections, illustrates, in a manner, what is meant by divine mission. We have seen (Question 95) that the Holy Ghost proceeds from the Father and the Son, as from one principle; therefore, this answer of the Catechism must be so understood as not to exclude the Father; the Father and the Son sent the Holy Ghost upon the Apostles. This is clear from the words of Christ Himself: "The Paraclete, the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in My name." (John xiv, 26.) . . . "When the Paraclete cometh, whom I will send you from the Father." (John xv, 26.) Christ had promised to the Apostles, to send them the Holy Ghost, and on Pentecost day He fulfilled that promise.

100. *Q. Why did Christ send the Holy Ghost?*

A. Christ sent the Holy Ghost to the Apostles to sanctify His Church, to enlighten and strengthen the Apostles, and to enable them to preach the Gospel.

The whole Church was then gathered within the walls of the Cenacle; Peter was the Pope, the visible Head of that Church. Even before the coming of the Holy Ghost we see him acting as such. For it is Peter who orders and presides at the election of St. Matthias, who is to take the place of Judas Iscariot. The Apostles and disciples with Peter at their head, and in company of Mary, the Mother of Jesus, were preparing themselves by prayer for the coming of the Holy Ghost. We may reasonably suppose that all of them were in the state of grace, that perfect contrition had even effaced the triple denial of Peter. The purpose then of Christ in sending the Holy Ghost was not to confer upon the Apostles and disciples sanctifying grace, because their souls were already holy and pleasing in the sight of God, but rather to give them an increase of it, and sanctify them still more. "He that is holy, let him be sanctified still" (Apoc. xxii, 11), says St. John. The Holy Ghost, the Sanctifier, gave unto the infant Church still more graces, even most probably to all its members confirmation in grace, that is, the special favor, which would keep them from ever abusing their liberty and losing the friendship of God. It is not necessary for us to believe that all received the graces of the Holy Ghost in the same measure. Since more was demanded of the Apostles, more graces were given them. They were to be enlightened by the Holy Ghost in their faith. The Father had given His Son for the salvation of the world; the Son before ascending into heaven had made His Father known to the world; the Holy Ghost comes down to unite Himself with the Church and to contract with her a fruitful alliance which was to renew the face of the earth. The Church established by Christ to perpetuate God's mercies to man, is the work of the Blessed Trinity. The Holy Ghost was to crown the work begun by the Son and to abide with the Church forever. He was also to enlighten the minds of the Apostles concerning many articles of faith and refresh their memory concerning others. Christ had said to them: "I have yet many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now; but when He, the Spirit of truth is come, He will teach you all truth." (John xvi, 12.) It was, therefore, left to the Holy Ghost to complete the deposit of faith, which the Apostles in turn would hand down to their successors. Christ said again: "He (the Holy

Ghost) will teach you all things and bring all things to your mind, whatsoever I shall have said to you." (John xv, 26.) There cannot possibly be then in the course of time any thing new in matters of faith, since the Apostles were taught all truth, in order to teach others in their turn. The Apostles were not only to be enlightened but above all to be strengthened. Christ had promised them immediately before ascending into heaven, that they would be endowed with power from on high, which would altogether transform them. (Luke xxiv, 49.) The Apostles had given during the Passion of our Lord abundant proofs of their weakness and cowardice, but they would henceforth give more abundant proofs of strength and courage, and he, who trembled at the voice of a servant girl, would not be afraid to face the very people who had crucified his Master, and to proclaim Him their Saviour. Persecutions and trials were to increase their courage and give a new impetus to the religion they were to preach. The Holy Ghost was, according to the words of Christ, to give testimony of Him, and the Apostles also were to give testimony of Him; the Holy Ghost was to enable them to preach the Gospel. Christ had commissioned them to go into the whole world and to preach the Gospel to every creature. (Mark xvi, 15.) The Holy Ghost was to enable them to do justice to their high calling. Of themselves they had nothing to make it a success, but with the assistance of the Holy Ghost they were to do as commanded them, and bring the most barbarous and impious nations to the unity of faith and the knowledge of the Son of God.

101. *Q. Will the Holy Ghost abide with the Church forever?*

A. The Holy Ghost will abide with the Church forever and guide it in the way of holiness and truth.

We have it on the authority of Christ Himself, that the Holy Ghost will abide with the Church forever. He had said to His Apostles before He began His passion: "I will ask the Father and He shall give you another Paraclete, that He may abide with you forever." (John xiv, 16.) This promise was fulfilled on Pentecost day, when the Holy Ghost came down upon all the members of the Church; He came to abide with the Church forever. No other meaning can be attached to the words of Christ. The

Apostles were not to remain upon earth forever, death would take them away and others would occupy their places. The Church of Christ, as we will have occasion to prove, will remain as long as there are men to be saved on earth. The Holy Ghost will abide with the Church, as represented by the Apostles and the disciples in the Cenacle. As He came then to sanctify the Church, to enlighten and strengthen the Apostles, so He will forever continue to sanctify the Church, to enlighten and strengthen those who continue the work of the Apostles. The Holy Ghost, abiding with the Church, will guide it in the way of holiness and truth, preserve it from error and moral corruption. The Apostles had received the whole deposit of faith, because the Holy Ghost had taught them all things, not for themselves only, but for all who would accept their words and embrace the religion they preached. Faith is one, and never can even one iota of its articles be changed. The faith which Christ taught His Apostles, and which was further revived in the minds of the Apostles, must remain forever. The work of Christ, however, would have been very incomplete, had He not made sure that there should be always practical faith in His Church, or in other words, that the Church should be free from moral corruption. For such was the Church which Christ had founded, "not having spot or wrinkle," as the Apostle says, "or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish." (Eph. v, 27.) To keep it such was the object of the sending of the Holy Ghost, who is called the Spirit of truth and of holiness. Dispassionate enquiry must necessarily show that the Holy Ghost, having come to abide with the Church, will guide it in the way of holiness and truth. But this admission is the peremptory condemnation of all sects and religious denominations, at variance with the Church upon which the Holy Ghost came. God is eternal truth and cannot be the Patron of error. Of all creeds there can be but one of divine origin, because God cannot contradict Himself. Now it is very plain that this one with which the Holy Ghost will abide forever, can never fall away from faith or holiness; if it could, the assistance of the Holy Ghost would not be efficacious, and Christ would not have given to men a sure guide. This explains what we are to think of the corruption attributed by various heresiarchs to the Church, which in their eyes justified

their secession from it. The Church, as founded by Christ, was in His lifetime true and holy, notwithstanding that the son of perdition was amongst its members. At the beginning of the twentieth century the Church founded by Christ is just as true and as holy as it was then, notwithstanding that it shelters many a son of perdition. A few individuals, be they even Pope or Bishops, are not the Church; granting that some were as bad as Judas, that would not militate against the holiness of the Church; granting even that a Bishop or several of them, were to teach error, that would not prove that the Church is not true to its faith. The plea of corruption or error would serve only as a cloak to cover apostasy. If non-Catholics would reflect on this for a moment, they would see at once, that the Church, which was the true one in the beginning, must be the true one even now, because the Holy Ghost, who abides with it forever, continues to guide it in the way of holiness and truth, and preserves it from error and corruption.

LESSON TENTH

ON THE EFFECTS OF THE REDEMPTION

102. *Q. Which are the chief effects of the Redemption?*

A. The chief effects of the Redemption are two; The satisfaction of God's justice by Christ's sufferings and death, and the gaining of grace for men.

The Catechism does not attempt to enumerate all the effects of the Redemption; they are so numerous and so varied, that no human intellect can conceive them all. The Catechism gives us here two of the chief effects of the Redemption. In Question 83, we have considered the first of the effects, viz: The satisfaction of God's justice by Christ's sufferings and death. An adequate atonement was required for the sins of men; Christ gave it by His sufferings and death. The restoration, however, of fallen humanity would not have been complete without the gaining of grace for men. Although Christ reconciled the human race with its Maker by wiping out the guilt of sin and the eternal punishment due to it; yet sin had made such deep wounds in the soul of man, that even after the reconciliation had been effected, he would have found it impossible to do what God demanded of him; without a helping hand man would have fallen away again. "Grace," says St. John, "came by Jesus Christ"; it is a fruit of the redemption that flowed, as it were, from the wounds of Jesus. The human race, which had fallen away from the state intended by God for it, was restored by the death of Christ. This restoration consists in a return unto men of grace and glory, or the beatific vision, as their last end, and they are prepared and disposed to that end by grace; so that grace is the beginning, glory the end of man after his restoration by Christ. The receiving of the costly gift of grace raises man to the supernatural order, because he thereby receives the power to be made a son of God. (John i, 12.) Christ became man that we might, to a certain ex-

tent, be "partakers of the divine nature." (II Pet. i, 4.) Grace, therefore, opens a new order of things. Through the sin of Adam grace became extinct, and man, who had become the enemy of God, was left in darkness and in the shadow of death; but with Christ a new sun rises, whose warm rays will cause fallen mankind, watered with the blood of Jesus, to rise again from its ashes and be filled with the spirit of supernatural life, by which men are transformed into children of God. This possibility of being made children of God was one of the chief effects of the Redemption. Hence it follows that man, aided by God's grace and coöperating with it, ranks higher in His eyes than man before the fall. Adam at his creation had been endowed with numerous gifts belonging to the natural order; man in the state of grace belongs to the supernatural order, and is capable of actions, to which God attaches supernatural effects. Grateful as Adam should have been for God's manifold gifts, doubly grateful should man be for the far greater work than creation, the work of his Redemption.

103. *Q. What do you mean by grace?*

A. By grace I mean a supernatural gift of God bestowed on us through the merits of Jesus Christ for our salvation.

All that man has or possesses is, indeed, a gift of God, who is the source and origin of all good; yet there is a great difference between the gifts of God to man. First, we have our body and our soul endowed with understanding and free will; our senses; and irrational creation, which under God's providence, provides us with what we need for our subsistence. These are indeed gifts of God, because we have no right to them, but they are natural gifts, because they refer to the nature of man, as he was intended to be here below. Secondly, there are gifts which are natural to creatures of a superior order, but which are granted to a creature of an inferior order; such was the gift of speech granted to the ass of Balaam. Such were also the gifts granted to Adam and Eve before their fall, of being immortal, of possessing sciences without having studied them, of being free from the irregular concupiscence of the flesh, and from all misery and misfortune. All these gifts are natural to angels, but not to man. These

are preternatural gifts and come nearer than the first to what we understand by grace. Thirdly, there are other gifts which are not natural to any created being, either angel or man; such as the seeing of the divine nature face to face, the knowledge of the mysteries of God, the gift of working miracles or of prophesying the future; the sonship of God. These gifts exceed all created nature; they are therefore called supernatural; they are graces. These graces differ greatly among themselves according to the purpose, for which they are granted. There are graces given to man chiefly for the salvation of others, which may not be accompanied by charity or sanctifying grace, such is the gift of miracles. One might be an apostle, confirm his teaching by miracles, and yet become a castaway; that is why St. Paul prayed that after having preached to others, he might not become a castaway. The fact of working miracles does not make man more pleasing in the eyes of God, and does not of itself tend to his own salvation. There are other graces, which make man pleasing in the eyes of God, or at least dispose him thereto. These are the graces to which the Catechism alludes in the answer given; they tend to the salvation of the one on whom they are bestowed. Grace is always a free gift, which God bestows on whom He pleases. He does not therefore do an injustice to any one by refusing him graces granted to others. They are not bestowed indiscriminately; to one five talents may be given, and to another but two. In the preceding question we have seen that one of the chief effects of the Redemption was to gain grace for men. Graces bestowed on man, therefore, come to him through the merits of Jesus Christ. Christ so restored fallen humanity, as to make it fit for receiving God's graces. A Catholic is more favored by God than other mortals, for he receives more graces, and is a member of the Church, which was appointed by God as the dispenser of His graces; more, therefore, shall be demanded of him than of others who have received less.

104. *Q. How many kinds of grace are there?*

A. There are two kinds of grace, sanctifying grace and actual grace.

Theologians distinguish many kinds of grace, according to different aspects, under which grace is viewed. The

Catechism speaks only of two kinds, sanctifying grace and actual grace. By the first we become adopted children of God and heirs of His kingdom; it enables us to merit heaven by our works. By the second we obtain the necessary assistance to be able to live as adopted children of God and thus to merit heaven, or also to be prepared to receive sanctifying grace.) The necessity of this twofold grace may be illustrated by an example. That a slave may, as a reward for his attachment and fidelity to his master, become his adopted child and share in all his possessions, he must first be actually adopted as such, and once adopted, he must be enabled to live according to his new station in life, that he may thereby be entitled to a share of his master's inheritance. The adoption is sanctifying grace; and whatever is requisite to make us worthy of this adoption, is actual grace. This will subsequently be more clearly explained. We add here in brief some of the chief points of Catholic doctrine in regard to grace.

For every act, pertaining to salvation, even for the beginning of faith, grace is necessary. This grace consists in a foregoing inspiration of the Holy Ghost, enlightening the understanding.

Without the help of grace, different from the gift of creation, or of a providence in the natural order, man cannot in the state of fallen nature, morally speaking, know all the truths of the natural order, or substantially fulfil the whole natural law, or overcome grievous temptations. Without this help he may know many practical truths of the natural order, perform the more easy commandments of the natural law, and overcome the lighter temptations. He can also, without the gift of faith, perform certain actions, naturally honest, that is, certain acts of merely natural virtue. After justification, that is, after the reception of sanctifying grace, in the present state of fallen nature, man, cannot, without a special help of God, or actual grace, persevere in justice unto the end; with the help of God's grace he can. Without a special privilege of God, it is impossible to avoid venial sins.

Grace is altogether a gratuitous gift; therefore, no action of man, which does not proceed from grace, but from an effort of nature only, can merit or obtain it.

God gives to all, to sinners and unbelievers as well as to the just, sufficient means whereby they may obtain salva-

tion. All men are created to enjoy God in heaven; none are destined for hell by an absolute decree of God; wilful sin is the cause of reprobation. In the justification of a sinner, his sins are truly forgiven and altogether blotted out; he is interiorly renewed by grace and charity, which are diffused in his heart by the Holy Ghost; along with sanctifying grace he certainly receives the three theological virtues of faith, hope and charity. To be justified, other dispositions are required in adults besides faith. Once justified, man is not therefore confirmed in grace; he really falls away from that state by every mortal sin.

There is probably no point of Catholic Theology more furiously assailed by Protestants than its doctrine on grace; their assaults led them to the most monstrous absurdities. The source of all these errors consists in a false idea of the state of man before sin, and the change brought about by sin. Pelagius said: "The sin of Adam has not injured human nature, and therefore man does not need the grace of Christ." The teaching of Protestants at the time of the Reformation is thus resumed: The sin of Adam has essentially vitiated human nature, and robbed it of all goodness and freedom; therefore grace can only cover this interior corruption, but not remove it. Catholics hold that the sin of Adam has wounded human nature and robbed it to some extent, but that it did not altogether corrupt it, nor extinguish free will. Hence the great abyss between us and others outside of the pale of the Church in regard to the doctrine on grace.

105. *Q. What is sanctifying grace?*

A. Sanctifying grace is that grace which makes the soul holy and pleasing to God.

Sanctifying grace, by which we become the adopted children of God, does not consist in a merely outward adoption. Adoption among men gives to the adopted manifold rights, but it does not bring about in them any inward change. Quite different is our adoption as children of God, and we shall readily understand the difference by considering the following points. To be some one's natural child it is necessary, 1st, That the father and the child be of the same nature; 2nd, That the child be born of him. It is clear that to be an adopted child the second condition is not required, because adoption replaces both,

but there must be a community of nature, for a man cannot adopt as his child an irrational creature, but only one that is human like himself. Man is not of the same nature as God; for he is limited in all things, whereas God is infinite; there is an immeasurable distance between the two. Therefore when God adopts man as His own child, He must enable him in some manner, to become something more, something higher than a mere created being, to become a partaker of His own life, of all His goods and even of His own nature. This proves that the divine adoption must really produce in us an interior change and elevate us above our nature. Sanctifying grace, therefore, is an inherent quality and a disposition of the soul to partake of the intellectual life of God, that is, of His wisdom and holiness, a disposition which is created in the soul by the infusion on the part of God of the supernatural virtues and the gifts of the Holy Ghost, which always accompany sanctifying grace. Sanctifying grace is, as we said, an inherent quality and a disposition of the soul; it does not consist in a new manner of being of the soul. Just as the art of writing is not a substantial being like the hand or the arm, but merely a disposition of the hand and the arm; so also is sanctifying grace not a substantial being, but only a new manner of being, a new quality and disposition of the soul. But although it is nothing substantial, yet it is something real, which penetrates the soul, invests it with new strength and adorns it. We call it an inherent, a lasting quality, to express that it is given not for a moment, not for a particular work, but to create a new state in the soul. We said also that it makes us partakers of the intellectual life of God, that is, of His holiness and His wisdom. Sanctifying grace does not make us partakers of all that God is; we do not share His omnipotence, or His omnipresence, etc.; but it makes us partakers of all those divine attributes, which refer to intellectual life, or, in other words, which help us directly to do what is right; and these are wisdom for the understanding, and holiness for the will. We also said that sanctifying grace is accompanied in us by supernatural virtues and the gifts of the Holy Ghost, and in saying so we share the opinion of many theologians, who claim that sanctifying grace is to those virtues and gifts, what the soul is to its faculties, its understanding and free will. To be perfect, the soul must possess these facul-

ties, and so must sanctifying grace, to be perfect, be accompanied by these virtues and gifts; these perfect the soul so as to incline man to perform supernatural works, by which he may merit heaven. Sanctifying grace, then, makes the soul holy and pleasing to God. The soul without it is not holy nor pleasing to God. From the foregoing description of sanctifying grace it will be easily seen that its effects are the following:

1st. From enemies it makes us friends of God.

2nd. It makes us "partakers of the divine nature"; St. Peter expressly treats of this effect and uses exactly the same words. (ii, 1, 4.)

3rd. From children of wrath it makes us adopted children of God and heirs of His kingdom.

4th. It makes our soul a temple of God; because although God is everywhere, yet He is in a particular manner where He manifests His power and the treasures of His grace; as heaven is His temple, so also is the soul endowed with sanctifying grace. For in the soul God works in a more wonderful manner than in the creation or the government of the world.

5th. Sanctifying grace unites man most intimately with God; this follows most clearly from the fact that man in that state is a child of God and that the soul is His temple. This close union is proved by numerous texts of the Holy Scripture which tell us that the Holy Ghost is given us by the Father and the Son to remain with us. The Blessed Trinity takes up her abode in the soul adorned with sanctifying grace. Nothing on earth can be compared to that treasure; therefore we must be disposed to part rather with all we have, and even with our life, than lose it.

106. *Q. What do you call those graces or gifts of God, by which we believe in Him, hope in Him and love Him?*

A. Those graces or gifts of God by which we believe in Him, and hope in Him and love Him are called the divine Virtues of Faith, Hope and Charity.

There is a great difference between these divine or theological virtues and the moral virtues; they form a different species. St. Thomas points out the difference in the following manner: Habits and virtues are distinguished according to the formal difference of their objects. The

object of the divine virtues is God Himself, who is the last end of things, and exceeds the bounds of our reason. The object of the moral virtues is something which we can comprehend; therefore they are specifically different from the theological. A divine virtue essentially requires that we esteem God more highly than all that may be opposed to the divine attribute to which the virtue refers. In other words, we are bound to submit to God by faith, hope and charity in all things that concern these virtues. Such a submission shows that we have a greater esteem and preference for God than for any thing opposed to Him or His attributes. So for instance, man would not think more of God than of every thing else, if he refused to submit to the divine authority in matters of faith, and submits instead to human authority or his own proud reasoning. The divine virtue of hope demands that man should rely more upon God's omnipotence, mercy and fidelity to His promises than upon any created goodness, the love of which is inconsistent with the love we owe to God. That is why Christ says: "He that loveth father more than Me, is not worthy of Me" (Mat. x, 37).

We now subjoin in a few words the teachings of the Catholic Church in regard to these divine virtues.

1st. There are three divine virtues, neither more nor less. "Now there remain faith, hope and charity, these three," says St. Paul, "but the greater of these is charity" (I Cor. xiii, 13). We will show further on that they are really divine virtues.

2nd. Divine virtues may be increased, not in number, but in perfection; that is why the Church prays that God may give us an increase of faith, hope and charity.

3rd. Divine virtues are increased by the same acts, which increase sanctifying grace. This is clear from the teachings of the Council of Trent.

4th. Charity is lost by every mortal sin; faith and hope not by every mortal sin, but only by one directly opposed to them.

5th. The blessed in heaven have charity, but not faith or hope. "Charity never falleth away" (I Cor. xiii, 8), says St. Paul. St. Jerome interprets these words as meaning: "Charity alone will remain forever." St. John Chrysostom says: "Faith and hope cease, when the things we believed and hoped have come."

6th. In the souls of Purgatory the three divine virtues remain; none remain in the damned in hell; this is the general belief of theologians. St. James says (ii, 19): "The devils believe and tremble;" this does not mean, however, that the divine and supernatural faith remains in them, because they lack altogether God's gratuitous gifts and every good motion of the will. They believe with a natural faith arising from the evidence of the signs they witness, and from their wretched experience of God's Justice.

107. *Q. What is faith?*

A. Faith is a Divine virtue by which we firmly believe the truths which God has revealed.

The sense of the question is wherein consists faith, which is required to serve God as He wishes, and to attain our last end.

To believe is to accept an assertion as true on the testimony of someone else, not because we realize the truth of it by our understanding or our senses, but only because someone testifies to its truth. To hold that twice two make four, that there is a sun and a moon, is not to believe but to know and to see; we hold these assertions to be true, not on the testimony of anyone, but because we understand by ourselves their truth. To take for true ancient history or descriptions given us of foreign countries, which we never visited, is to believe, because we admit their truth, not because we have seen them, but on the testimony of historians or travellers. Consequently, to believe in God is to accept as true all that God has revealed, not because we see the truth of it with our understanding or our senses, but because God has so spoken.

The Catechism here treats, not of the act of faith, but of the virtue of faith; without acts of faith there could be no virtue of faith; and to be saved we must possess the virtue of faith. The definition given of the virtue of faith teaches us: 1st, the origin of faith; 2nd, wherein it consists; 3rd, how we must believe, and 4th, what we must believe.

1st. It is a *divine* virtue, a gift of God, a gift which cannot be acquired by our own exertions, as different sciences may be acquired by our own endeavors; a gift which God is not obliged to give us, but which He freely gives us out of His own goodness. Why should it be so? Because the happiness of heaven, the beatific vision of God to which

we are called, surpasses the capacity of created nature, and could not be enjoyed without the supernatural action of God; therefore, the actions by which we merit that reward, must also be supernatural. But these supernatural actions proceed from supernatural virtues, which are infused by God. Thus the virtue of faith, which is necessary to salvation, must be divine, that is, be directly the supernatural gift of God. When is this virtue infused in us? When God justifies man, that is, when He applies the merits of Christ's passion to him, adopts him as His child by granting him sanctifying grace. This virtue is infused by Baptism, or by justification after it has been lost by a direct sin against it. Although faith is a gift of God pure and simple, yet God does not act arbitrarily in dispensing it; it is granted to all those, who comply with the conditions He has put.

2nd. It is by this gift that we firmly believe. This gift consists in a supernatural light and help to the understanding, by which we clearly see that divine revelation is worthy of belief and must be believed, are induced to accept it through faith and assisted in the act of believing. Faith, however, is not only a light, it is also a disposition of the will inclining it to believe and supporting it in its belief. It is not sufficient to see the truth, we must also have the strength to embrace it.

3rd. By the virtue of faith our understanding is enlightened and our will strengthened to believe in God; but how must we believe? Firmly, that is, without doubting, being fully convinced that it is absolutely impossible that God's Revelation can be untrue in any particular. Without doubting, that is, without thinking deliberately that revelation may or may not be true. God is infallible truth, who cannot possibly deceive us; therefore what He reveals must be absolutely true.

4th. We must believe the truths which God has revealed. But how can we know what God has revealed? The answer Catholics give to that question is different from that of Protestants. According to these the Bible gives us the whole of God's revelation; according to the Catholics, the Bible is only a part of it; Christian Tradition is the other, and the Church draws from both these sources what she teaches us as contained in the divine Revelation. The Church was commissioned to teach all that God has com-

manded, and the truths which we are to believe, long before the New Testament was written. To believe in the Bible only, is to claim, without proof, that it contains the whole Revelation. The Church of Christ was established without it, and would endure without it.

108. *Q. What is hope?*

A. Hope is a divine virtue by which we firmly trust that God will give us eternal life and the means to attain it.

Like faith, hope is a virtue, that is, a disposition of the soul, by which man acts rightly; as vice is a disposition to evil, so is virtue a disposition to good. The hope necessary to salvation is not an occasional act of hope, but the virtue. Hope is a *divine* virtue, that is, a gift of God, which cannot be acquired by our natural exertions, and which God is not obliged to give us to complete our nature; it is, therefore, a supernatural gift bestowed on us freely by God. As eternal life in the sense in which it is taken here, viz: the beatific vision of God, is a supernatural destination, to which we have no natural right, and consequently a gift of God; so are also the means leading to it supernatural and gifts of God. Like faith, the gift of hope is bestowed on us in baptism; and if ever lost by a sin contrary to it, it is recovered again by the infusion or recovery of sanctifying grace. The virtue of hope disposes us to trust firmly in God; it makes us expect and desire effectually eternal life and the means to acquire it. He who hopes, does not possess the object of his hope, but he does all in his power to obtain it; to hope, he must expect and request; the one without the other would not be hope. The divine virtue of hope makes us expect from God and request of Him eternal life, and the means thereto; because God is the sovereign Master, whom we must serve, and from whom all good proceeds. When we call the Saints our hope, we do not mean that they are the supreme rewarders of virtue, but only that we count on their powerful intercession. The object of hope is eternal life and the means thereto. By eternal life, we understand the happiness of heaven, including the beatific vision of God and the enjoyment of all good with it. The means to obtain it are the remission of sins, which would prevent us from entering heaven, and the grace to lead a good life. To serve God as we should, we must

expect a reward for our service and the necessary helps to do our duties. God has promised us in His Revelation eternal life as a reward, and the remission of sins along with the necessary grace as the means to obtain it. That is why we trust *firmly,* that is, with a perfect assurance, that we can obtain the object of our hope on the part of God, and also with perfect certainty on our own part, provided we are disposed to do what is demanded of us. Absolute certainty is, indeed, inconsistent with hope. All fear must be excluded that anything could be wanting on the part of God, or that the means to obtain the end may not be obtainable; we must fear, however, lest we be not always disposed to do what is demanded of us. This firm confidence consists then in a perfect certainty not of obtaining the object, but of our ability to obtain it, if we will. Whereon rests this firm confidence? On the infinite goodness, the infinite power and the infinite fidelity of God. God is disposed to give us all we hope, because He is infinitely good; He can give it to us, because He is Almighty; and we know that He will give it to us, because He has promised it, and because He is infinitely faithful to His promises. Hence it follows that our trust in God must be infinitely superior to the confidence we can place in man, because there is no comparison between the goodness, the power and the fidelity of God and that of any mortal. It follows also that even had we committed the greatest crimes, it should not cause us to lose our trust in God, because there is not any comparison between the sins of the whole world and the goodness and mercy of God. If these attributes were in God as they are in men or angels, the sight of our iniquities should make us lose hope; but because God is infinite, there are no sins so great and so numerous, which He will not forgive; no sins which He cannot forgive, and no sins which He is not bound to forgive according to His promise, provided man complies with what is demanded of him to obtain forgiveness.

109. *Q. What is Charity?*

A. Charity is a divine virtue by which we love God above all things for His own sake and our neighbor as ourselves for the love of God.

Charity is a divine virtue, because it has God for object and motive. The definition given by the Catechism teaches

us, 1st, whence charity proceeds; 2nd, what we do by it; 3rd, whom we love by it; 4th, how and why we love them by it.

1st. Charity is a divine virtue, not only in its object and motive, but also in that it is, like faith and hope, a virtue infused by God. It cannot be acquired as such by our own exertions, it is not due as a reward of our works, however good in themselves, but it is a supernatural gift, freely bestowed by God on man out of love for him. Charity is infused in us by baptism together with the theological virtues of faith and hope. It is lost by every mortal sin, which deprives us of sanctifying grace; and it is again restored by the infusion or recovery of sanctifying grace. Charity is inseparably connected with sanctifying grace.

2nd. The virtue of charity creates in us a disposition to love. What is love? To love is to wish well to one, to wish that he may keep the good he has, and obtain what he has not. To love one is to wish him all that we could desire for ourselves, according to the dictates of true wisdom.

3rd. Whom do we love by this virtue? The Catechism answers God and our neighbor. God is the primary and principal object of our love; our neighbor, the secondary object. To love God consists in wishing Him all the good which according to His infinite wisdom He wishes to Himself, and in being disposed to work for that purpose in as far as we are able. The good which God wishes to Himself is His Being with His infinite perfections, and His glory from creatures; consequently, to love God, we must take delight in His being and in His infinite perfections, wish that His glory be procured by creatures, and do for that end what reason and faith demand of us. God has clearly expressed Himself in His commandments as to what He desires of us, and therefore we shall love God, if we keep His commandments. To love our neighbor, we must wish him his true happiness, and, therefore do what we can, in order that he may obtain it. God has also clearly explained in His commandments, what we must wish our neighbor and what we have to do for his happiness, and therefore we shall really love our neighbor, if we keep the commandments of God.

4th. How must we love God and our neighbor? We must love God above all things, and our neighbor as our-

selves. To love God above all things is to be disposed to lose rather all things, and even life, than to lose the friendship of God through mortal sin. Whereas God infinitely surpasses all things outside of Himself, it is but natural that our love for God should exceed the love we bear to everything else. We must love our neighbor as ourselves; therefore, if we do not truly love ourselves, we do not truly love our neighbor either. The love of ourselves is the measure of love of our neighbor; we therefore do not love our neighbor, if we do anything to him that would be detrimental to ourselves. To love him, we must not only not wish him any evil, but wish him all the good we can wish for ourselves, and do all that God demands of us for that purpose. Why do we love God? The Catechism replies: For His own sake, that is, for His goodness, mercy and love to us, and for His other perfections by which He surpasses every other good. To love God for His favors to us, would not be loving Him for His own sake; we must love Him, because He is most lovable in Himself. We love our neighbor for the love of God; we therefore love God and our neighbor for the same motive; hence it follows also that the love of God and the love of our neighbor are not two, but one and the same virtue. St. Thomas beautifully explains how God is the motive of our love for our neighbor: Charity shows itself in this way, that he who loves one, on his account also loves all those who belong to him, viz: his children, his servants and all others connected with him. Our love for a friend may be so intense, that we love on his account all those that are connected with him, should they even injure or hate us. So does the love of God embrace even our enemies, whom we love for God's sake. To love our neighbor for God's sake, our love must relate exclusively to God, if we wish it to be lasting and conducive to our last end. We may love the neighbor's perfections in as much as they are the work of God; to love them otherwise would be but a natural love and not an act of a supernatural virtue. The love of God and the love of our neighbor are therefore inseparable; the one cannot exist without the other. Christ made the love of the neighbor the distinctive mark of His true disciples, when He said: "By this shall all men know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another."

110. *Q. What is actual grace?*
A. Actual grace is that help of God, which enlightens our mind and moves our will to shun evil and do good.

Actual grace consists in a transient ray of light for the understanding, and in a transient motion of the will, both coming directly from God; both are supernatural, and induce us to shun evil and do good. Actual grace is a transient gift; it is not like sanctifying grace a permanent disposition, but a gift that lasts only for a few moments, or for the time it takes to perform a certain work. This transient help enlightens the understanding, that is, it is not a real revelation, but a ray of light, which not only dissipates the darkness of the understanding, but shows us, at the same time, how we must act in the light of faith, in order to obtain salvation. Actual grace is, at the same time, a motion of the will, that is, it inspires the will with a horror of sin, and an inclination for virtue. Actual grace is a supernatural help for the understanding and the will only, and not for our other faculties, because to do a good and meritorious act, we need only our understanding and our will; these two faculties need supernatural help to perform a supernatural good work. Actual grace is a help in the supernatural order, coming directly from God. The reason of this is, that to perform an action to which the happiness of heaven is due as a reward, or which disposes us to receive sanctifying grace, the power of a created being is altogether inadequate; divine power is required for that; consequently, actual grace would not be serviceable to our salvation if, in both its parts, it did not come directly from God, and was a communication, not of the understanding and the will of a created being, but of the divine knowledge and holiness itself.

To perform a work, by which we merit heaven, sanctifying grace is not sufficient; actual grace is required besides. The reason of this is very clear. Sanctifying grace is a quality, a disposition of the soul; a disposition or a propensity is not effective in itself. For instance, a man does not write by the fact alone that he can write; to write in reality, besides the ability to do it, the will to do so is also required; so also to do what faith demands of man, the disposition to do it arising from sanctifying grace is

not sufficient; but the effective action of the will is also necessary.

Whenever God works in man in a supernatural manner, and fits him to an action which surpasses the powers of nature, we have a true image of actual grace. Many such instances may be quoted from the Old Testament as well as from the New. We will only quote, as an example, the wonderful exploits of Samson. When Samson carried the gates of Gaza on a mountain, and broke the two pillars of the house, wherein three thousand Philistines were gathered, causing it to crumble together, the natural strength of his arms was certainly inadequate; but it was his natural strength moved, sustained and fortified by God, which produced these wonders. If now we apply the working of God on Samson's bodily strength, to our understanding and our will, we will have a clear idea of actual grace.

111. *Q. Is grace necessary to salvation?*

A. Grace is necessary to salvation, because without grace we can do nothing to merit heaven.

No principle of Catholic doctrine has found more opponents than the Catholic dogma on grace. Grace is necessary to salvation; without it man would be absolutely unfit for the kingdom of heaven. The Catholic dogma, as set forth in the answer given by the Catechism, is chiefly directed against the heresy of Pelagius. In the beginning of the fifth century, under the plea of opposing the Manicheans, Pelagius tried to do away with the grace of the Redeemer altogether. The Manicheans taught that our body came forth from an evil principle and was wholly corrupted; Pelagius now claimed that our body is so pure, as to be immune of all stain of original sin. According to Pelagius there is no original sin in us; our natural powers and free will are sufficient; grace is not necessary; the grace of God is given according to the merit of our natural works. The Pelagians fell into these absurdities by stages. At first they made no mention at all of grace; then they mistook our nature and our free will for grace; afterwards they looked upon the law of God, the examples of Christ and the remission of sin as the only grace; finally, they acknowledged a true internal grace, but infected their views with so many errors, that they practically denied grace. They rested

their errors on a triple false foundation: they claimed first, that the absolute necessity of grace is inconsistent with free will; secondly, that God does not command impossible things, and therefore has not given a law, which man cannot keep by his own strength; thirdly, that God is not an accepter of persons, and therefore cannot dispense His grace but according to the merits of each. The heresy of Pelagius was condemned by 24 particular councils, among others, in the council of Milevium in Numidia, where, on the receipt of the decrees of Pope Innocent I, St. Augustine uttered the famous sentence: "Rome has spoken, the cause is ended. May the error be ended also!"

The reformers of the XVI century impressed on the minds of their followers an absolutely absurd idea of grace. According to them free will is a myth, man cannot resist grace, and is necessarily led either to good or to evil; the commandments of God are impossible to be kept, and even with the grace, such as God grants, man cannot keep them. These errors have been modified again and again by modern heretics, leaving, however, the idea of grace so confused, that their followers must be at a loss to know what grace really is.

In the preceding pages some of these errors have been refuted, we now will prove that grace is absolutely necessary to salvation. The necessity of grace is clearly set forth in these words of St. Paul: "Not that we are sufficient to think anything of ourselves, as of ourselves; but our sufficiency is from God" (II Cor. iii, 5). Our Lord says: "As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abide in the vine, so neither can you, unless you abide in Me. I am the vine; you are the branches; he that abideth in Me and I in him, the same beareth much fruit, for without Me you can do nothing" (John xv, 4, 5). The means must have a proportion to the end; an action therefore to be conducive to salvation, must proceed from grace. This applies to the beginning of faith, as well as to the recovering of sanctifying grace after it has been lost by sin. Grace is necessary to overcome our passions, as well as to keep God's commandments. Grace is especially necessary to persevere unto the end, for it is to final perseverance that the crown is promised. Heaven is the goal, grace puts us on the right road. Nature of itself can lay no claims to things above itself; heaven is a supernatural

reward; grace alone can raise our actions to the supernatural order; therefore grace is absolutely necessary to salvation.

112. *Q. Can we resist the grace of God?*

A. We can and unfortunately we often do resist the grace of God.

Faith and experience teach clearly that man under the influence of divine grace remains entirely free to coöperate with it or to resist it. The Church has proclaimed this as a dogma of faith at the Council of Trent. Scripture and Tradition confirm this most explicitly. The Council of Trent in its teaching on justification has the following: "If any one say that the free will of man, moved and excited by God, does not coöperate by giving his assent to the call of God whereby man disposes and prepares himself to obtain the grace of justification, and that he cannot dissent, if he wishes, but as an inanimate thing does not act at all, and is altogether passive, let him be anathema." The Council by this definition only voices the doctrine of Scripture and Tradition. This applies not only to the grace which theologians call *sufficient,* but even to efficacious grace. Scripture furnishes numerous instances of men resisting the grace of God. "What is there, says the Lord, that I ought to do more to My vineyard, that I have not done to it?" (Is. v, 4.) And yet the Jews resisted, for which God often rebukes them. The grace of God was sufficient, but they resisted, so much so that St. Stephen could say to them: "You always resist the Holy Ghost" (Acts vii, 51). Scripture calls the man blessed "who could have transgressed and hath not transgressed, and could do evil things and hath not done them" (Eccli. xxxi, 10). Even efficacious grace does not destroy the free will of man, as God will not make of man a mere machine. The coöperation of the will is necessary to merit praise and reward for virtue. God, who created man without him, will not save him without him. The most extraordinary grace granted to the good thief at the last moment, to be conducive to salvation, presupposed his coöperation. Our own conscience testifies that unfortunately we often do resist the grace of God. We hear the voice of God's grace inviting us to a better life, and we fail to answer this call. All our sins, both mortal and venial, are so many

acts of resistance to His grace. We do not necessarily commit these sins; on the contrary, we are prompted in each case by God's grace to avoid them, and practise the contrary act, when tempted to transgress His law. Our whole life illustrates the correctness of this doctrine. Our merit will be all the greater, as we more manfully resist all temptations, in order to coöperate of our own free will with God's grace.

113. *Q. What is the grace of perseverance?*

A. The grace of perseverance is a particular gift of God, which enables us to continue in the state of grace till death.

The gift of final perseverance must not be confounded with the gift of confirmation in grace. Although all who are saved, received the grace of final perseverance, yet this grace embraces two degrees: the first we may call *common,* implying all the internal and external help of ordinary efficacy: the other may be called *particular,* as it implies not only the ordinary means, but also helps of extraordinary efficacy. The first is the gift of perseverance, the second is the gift of confirmation in grace; both are sanctifying grace; the second implies a larger share of it. Confirmation in grace implies final perseverance; the mere gift of perseverance does not imply confirmation in grace. The Apostles, after the descent of the Holy Ghost, were confirmed in grace and, in fact, persevered till death; millions in heaven persevered unto death, although they had not been confirmed in grace. The grace of final perseverance is a gift distinct from sanctifying grace. Sanctifying grace was infused into our soul in baptism, unaccompanied, however, by the gift of final perseverance; millions now in hell were once the friends of God, but did not persevere in His friendship. As the grace of perseverance is a gift freely given, it is never strictly due to our actions. But it does not follow, however, that God, merely for His pleasure, gives it to some and refuses it to others. Certain modern heretics still pretend that God has from all eternity, destined some for heaven and others for hell. This monstrous doctrine is altogether inconsistent with God's mercy. He came to save all men; all are called to the kingdom of heaven, but, owing to their lack of coöperation, only the few will be chosen. God knows from all eternity our places

in the world to come; the places are already prepared. God knows who will correspond with His grace, and who will not; He leaves to all their free will, and He knows whether they will abuse it or not; they can transgress His law or keep it; hell or heaven will be the sanction of that law. It would be therefore absurd to say that, admitting God's knowledge of our future state, it is useless for us either to try to avoid hell or to try to merit heaven. Heaven is a reward for man's wilful good works, as hell is a punishment for man's wilful evil deeds. The teachers of that monstrous doctrine would be the first to give it the lie in their daily lives. Nothing happens without God's permission; He foresees from all eternity our standing in this world, He knows when we shall be sick, whether a ship will enter the harbor or perish at sea. Do not the efforts of the business man make a difference as to his financial standing? Will not the doctor's skill and medicine often cure us of a sickness, which otherwise would carry us off? Is not the captain's knowledge of dangerous places, and the care he takes of the ships, conducive to a safe passage, whilst his ignorance and neglect would probably lead to certain destruction? God's knowledge has no limits, it extends to all the actual actions of free beings, as also to their possible actions, though these will never be performed. This knowledge does not destroy free will; we shall be saved or lost *as* God foresees, but *not because* of His foresight. The gift of perseverance is a gift; a favor never due to our actions, but a favor, which will not be refused, when persistently asked of God by prayer. We must, as St. Paul says, "work out our salvation with fear and trembling" (Phil. ii, 12); we must "take heed lest we fall" (I Cor. x. 12), and in the mean time use the means requisite to make our salvation morally sure. Among the principal are prayer, the frequent and worthy reception of the Sacraments, and a tender devotion to the Blessed Mother of God, the Mother of perseverance.

LESSON ELEVENTH

ON THE CHURCH

114. *Q. Which are the means instituted by our Lord to enable man at all times to share in the fruits of the Redemption?*

A. The means instituted by our Lord to enable men at all times to share in the fruits of His Redemption are the Church and the Sacraments.

Before enquiring into the marks and attributes of the Church, the Catechism first considers the necessity of such an institution, and claims it is one of the means instituted by Christ to enable men at all times to share in the fruits of the Redemption. Without the Church the fruits of the Redemption would not be shared by mankind, because the Redeemer did not intend it, and because He entrusted to His Church the means whereby His merits would be applied to mankind. There is no Christianity without the Church. Christianity without the Church would be only an ideal or imaginary being, like humanity without a real man; the Church is the concrete manifestation of Christianity. By the same act by which Christ founded His religion, He also founded His Church, in which His spirit continues to live, His word to instruct and His grace to save. He uses the same solemn authority when He sends His Apostles to preach His religion, as when He founded His Church. "ALL power is given to Me in heaven and in earth; going therefore teach ye all nations, baptizing them" (Mat. xxviii, 18). "I say to thee; Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build My Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it" (Mat. xvi, 18). This identity of Christianity and the Church is so intimate, that to enjoy the benefits of Christianity, one must be in the Church, otherwise one is like a heathen and a publican. "He who has not the Church as his Mother, cannot have God as his Father," says St. Cyprian. Hence the design of Christ

to publish His doctrine all over the world, is really identical with His design of founding the Church. Diffusion of Christianity among nations means extension of the Church. As Christianity is the work of God, so also is the Church the work of God. Without Christianity no one could lay claim to the fruits of the Redemption; without the Church no one can justly lay claim to them. The Church is truly the means whereby man shares in the fruits of the Redemption.

The Sacraments have from the beginning been linked to the essence of the Church; they belong to the Church and form an integral and essential part of the religious life. Christ could have directly applied to the souls of all men the merits of His passion. It was therefore not absolutely necessary for Him to institute the Sacraments to enable men to share in the fruits of the Redemption. Leaving aside the fact that Christ really did institute them and intended them to be the means, whereby men should be saved, it seems that the plan of thus saving man was, in itself most appropriate for various reasons; 1st, Because it is proper to human nature to be led from the material and visible to the spiritual and intelligible; 2nd, To prove God's omnipotence, who alone can by sensible things produce the spiritual life of grace; 3rd, That there might be some visible signs and bonds to unite the members of the visible Church, and distinguish them from all outsiders; 4th, That these Sacraments might be so many testimonies of our faith; 5th, That as the Author of salvation united His invisible divinity with His corporal humanity, so also in the economy of our redemption visible signs might contain divine grace.

The Church and the Sacraments are the great means of salvation.

115. *Q. What is the Church?*

A. The Church is the congregation of all those who profess the faith of Christ, partake of the same Sacraments and are governed by their lawful pastors under one visible Head.

We have explained in the preceding question the close connexion which exists between the Church and the Christian religion; they are as two parts of the same whole, as

the completion with the work begun, the building with the foundation.

The word Church, like the Latin *ecclesia,* has different meanings. It may be taken for the place of meeting, as St. Paul uses it: "I hear that when you come together in the church, there are schisms among you" (I Cor. xi, 18), or for the people meeting there. In the latter meaning, it applies in the Old Testament to congregations, whether good, bad or indifferent. When applied to the gathering of the good, it may stand in general for a congregation of those who serve God, and then it comprises the Church triumphant, the Church suffering and the Church militant; or it may mean more particularly the gathering of the faithful or the Church militant. It may be taken again for the Church of God or the Church of Christ; in the first case, it comprises all those who believed in a true God from the beginning of the world, whether in the state of nature, of the Old Law, or of the Law of Grace; in the second case, it comprises only those who believe explicitly in Christ, all those who have been baptized. When used to mean the Church of Christ, it may either apply to the true or to the false church of Christ. The true Church of Christ is the Church founded by Christ, and answers to the definition given by the Catechism.

The Church of Christ is a congregation, a society, the most perfect society on earth. A society supposes authority as an essential condition; without authority no society can exist; authority is the bond holding together the component parts of a society, i. e., the individuals. The Church of Christ is, therefore, not merely a congregation, or a philosophical school, or a gathering of men professing in some manner the name of Christ. It is a perfect moral body, consisting, like a living person, of a mystical body and soul. In as far as the mystical body is concerned, the Church signifies a visible society, without reference to the interior gifts of grace; when the soul of the Church is meant, it signifies that same visible society together with its interior adornment of grace. The definition given by the Catechism applies to the body of the Church; it includes even those who are not united with Christ by charity, that is, are not in the state of grace. In the Church there are the good and the bad, the cockle and the wheat. There may be among them some who profess the faith of Christ, par-

take of the same Sacraments, are governed by the hierarchical authorities; and yet do not belong to the soul of the Church, because they are in mortal sin. A mere theoretical profession of the faith of Christ would not make one a member of the Church; even the theoretical believing of all that Christ has taught, would not be sufficient. Baptism is the only door by which we enter into that society. As Christ is the organizer of that society, no one can enter it except on the conditions laid down by Him. The Church was intended by Him to be a visible society, a society to be seen and known by all, so as to enable all men to belong to it; a visible authority or a visible Head is, therefore, necessary for such a visible society. All these requisites are essential to the true Church of Christ; wherever one of these is wanting, it is a clear proof that such a church is false, and not Christ's Church. Faith is the foundation of the Christian religion; religion and faith differ from the Church as the abstract from the concrete; the true Church is *the* faith and *the* Christian religion, as living and determined in the faithful. The following pages will more fully explain the divine constitution of the Church of Christ; the distinctive features given it by its Founder so plainly manifest it, that almost none but the wilfully blind can fail to see it.

116. *Q. Who is the invisible Head of the Church?*
A. Jesus Christ is the invisible Head of the Church.

Jesus Christ is the Head of the Church, because He is its Founder and continues to be the chief Ruler of the Church. He is the invisible Head, because since His glorious Ascension, He is no longer visible on earth. Christ founded a Church, (the next lesson will give the distinctive marks of that Church, and show which it is), as history, tradition, a lasting fact and reason itself clearly prove. 1st, The history of the New Testament, the words and the acts of Christ, like those of the Apostles, prove that institution. Christ first promises to build His church, and to give it the keys of the kingdom of heaven. (Mat. xvi, 18.) Afterwards He imparts to Peter and the other Apostles His power, and sends them into the world to preach, to administer the Sacraments and to rule in His name those, who would believe and be baptised. The Apostles fulfilled the command of the Lord, as is clear from their Acts and

Epistles. They went forth teaching, baptizing, and gathering the faithful into one spiritual kingdom, over which they by divine authority presided. We see them not only teaching and baptizing, but also giving commands, making laws, punishing, ordaining deacons and bishops. They preside over the Council of Jerusalem. St. Paul excommunicates the unworthy, receives again the penitent Corinthian. As the flock grows in numbers, they take unto themselves auxiliary bishops, to whom by the imposition of the hands they communicate their own powers. They thus carried out the command of Christ.

Constant Tradition has always held Christ to be the Founder of a church. Then there is the lasting fact of a particular church, constituted in its government, like an organic body, which has at all times claimed to owe its origin to Christ, and of which history itself confirms the claims. If we were to take this only as human testimony, it would be just as trustworthy as an ancient inscription engraven in steel or marble. Reason itself tells us that the institution of such a society was most becoming to the divine wisdom, for it would for ever preserve the faith pure and free from all corruption. We are, therefore, naturally led to believe that such a society must have been instituted.

The Church is, then, the positive work of Christ, just as a building is the work of the builder; its form and constitution must ever be what Christ intended; no human authority can ever change it. Christ is the Head, because He is the Founder. He promised to abide with His work unto the end of time. He calls the Church *His* Church, the members of the Church *His* sheep; He remains the supreme Shepherd. Before ascending into heaven He appointed a vicar, a vicegerent upon earth to rule His Church and His sheep, He remaining the Invisible Head, directing in an invisible manner the destinies of His Church.

117. *Q. Who is the visible Head of the Church?*

A. Our Holy Father the Pope, the Bishop of Rome is the Vicar of Christ on earth and the visible Head of the Church.

If the Church is a visible society, there necessarily must be a visible head. Christ willed that His Church should be a visible society, therefore it must have a visible head.

The visibility of the Church may be viewed in two ways, materially or formally. When considered materially, it is composed of men who can be seen; so all the just are visible, although their justice may not be seen. When considered formally, the Church may be seen as having clear marks of its divine origin and working. So was Christ visible on earth not only as man, but also as God-Man, for His divinity shone forth by conspicuous signs. Protestants have denied this formal visibility of the Church, saying that the Church was either composed of the just and the elect only, or hidden in the true faithful. We claim that the Church by the institution of Christ must be visible, not only inasmuch as it is a congregation of visible men, but also inasmuch as it is the Church of Christ plainly visible on account of its distinctive features among all sects. The Prophet Isaiah foretells this visibility: "In the last days the mountain of the house of the Lord shall be prepared on top of the mountains, and it shall be exalted above the hills, and all nations shall flow unto it" (Is. ii, 2). This text evidently applies to the Church of the New Law, because the period from the coming of Christ until the last day represents in Scripture the last day; no other time shall come after it, but only eternity. A mountain on top of the mountains cannot be hidden, neither can the Church of Christ. "A city seated on a mountain cannot be hid" (Mat. 1, 14), says Christ. "Take heed to yourselves and the whole flock, wherein the Holy Ghost has placed you bishops, to rule the Church of God" (Acts xx, 28). How could men rule a church, which is not visible?

The whole Christian Tradition has always believed in a visible church. "It is easier," says St. Chrysostom, "to extinguish the sun than to destroy the Church." The very nature of the Church clearly proves it to be a visible society. In all human societies there must be an authority; this authority cannot be used except on subjects known and visible. Add to this, that the Church is a necessary society, that Christ obliges all men to belong to it; this would seem both absurd and cruel, if it could not be seen.

Conceding that the Church is a visible society, there must indeed be a visible Head; the Catechism tells us that the Pope is the Head, and that he is the vicar, the vicegerent of Christ, the invisible Head. As such the Pope must have the same position, the same power as Christ, with this dif-

ference that he does not hold that position and power from himself, but has received them from Christ, and that he must use that power, not according to his own will, but in such manner and measure as Christ ordered. The following question will show why the Pope is the head of the Church and vicar of Christ on earth.

118. *Q. Why is the Pope, the Bishop of Rome, the visible Head of the Church?*

A. The Pope, the Bishop of Rome, is the visible Head of the Church, because he is the successor of St. Peter, whom Christ made the chief of the Apostles and the visible Head of the Church.

To make the doctrine set forth in this answer clear, we must prove 1st, that Christ did make St. Peter the chief of the Apostles and the visible Head of the Church, and 2nd, that the Pope, as successor of St. Peter, enjoys the same privileges.

The supremacy not only of honor, but also of jurisdiction or power in St. Peter is clearly proved by Scripture, more clearly than a great many other points, to which our separated brethren take no exception. Christ promised this superiority to St. Peter before His death. He had told him and him only, that upon him, as upon a rock, He would build His Church, that He would give him the keys of the kingdom of Heaven (Mat. xvi, 18). The kingdom of heaven here means the same thing as what Christ calls His Church in the preceding sentence. Both these symbolic expressions indicate that Peter was to receive supreme authority over the faithful. The building rests on its foundations, and the keys are the symbols of authority in the house. Christ has deigned to explain the meaning to be attached to His promise: "Whatsoever," says He (v, 19), "thou shalt bind upon earth, it shall be bound also in heaven; whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth, it shall be loosed also in heaven," that is, all that you shall have ordered or defined on earth for the faithful, it shall be ratified in heaven. Hence it follows that Peter's authority must extend to the limits of the earth, that there is no appeal from his orders, consequently, that he must be the head of the Church. That promise made in such clear and forcible words was fulfilled, when Christ, after His resurrection said to Peter and to him only: "Feed My lambs, Feed My

sheep" (John xxi, 15), that is rule over My flock, My Church, over both the pastors and the faithful. By those words Peter was really appointed head of the Church.

To understand the exact meaning of what Our Lord meant, we have but to see what significance the Apostles themselves attached to the words of our Saviour, how convinced they were of Peter's supremacy of honor and jurisdiction. Whenever the names of the Apostles occur in Scripture, Peter's name always comes first, although his brother Andrew was older and was called before him to the Apostolate. In the first Council of the Church Peter orders the election of a new Apostle in place of the traitor Judas. After the descent of the Holy Ghost, Peter is the first to preach the Gospel. After the churches were multiplied, Peter visits them as the Head of them all. When differences arose between the converted Jews and the converted heathens concerning the obligations of the Law of Moses, Peter is the first to give his opinion or decision, which was accepted by all present. St. Paul after his conversion, visits St. Peter before any of the other Apostles. All this did not happen accidentally; on the contrary, the Apostles all recognized Peter's supremacy and acted accordingly. Peter was the first Pope, the first Bishop of Rome, the first visible head of the Church.

But how do we know that the Pope of Rome is the true successor of St. Peter? The question comes to this: Did Christ will that Peter should have successors, and if so, are the Popes these successors? First, it is clear from Scripture that Peter's supremacy had to be handed over to successors unto the end of time. Christ commanded those whom He had placed in charge of His flock with Peter at their head, to preach the faith and rule over the faithful even to the consummation of the world, promising that He would ever remain with them (Mat. xxviii, 20). To make it possible for Christ to remain to the end of the world with Peter and the other Apostles, they had to have successors in their respective charges. Christ appointed Peter as Chief Pastor of the Church principally to preserve unity; the more widely propagated and spread the Church would be in the course of time, the more need there would necessarily be of a visible head; Christ therefore intended that Peter should have successors in his exalted position. But how can we prove that the Bishops of Rome are the suc-

cessors of St. Peter? Peter began preaching the Gospel in Jerusalem, and was for some time Bishop of Jerusalem. Leaving afterwards St. James the Less as Bishop of this see, Peter goes to Antioch, the metropolis of the East. The Church here had been founded by St. Paul and St. Barnabas, yet St. Peter, on account of his dignity is recognized as the chief Pastor.

About seven years later he places St. Ignatius at the head of that church and departs for Rome, where he permanently fixes his see, and ended his life by dying a martyr on a cross. Never has any other Bishop than the Roman claimed or been acknowledged to be the successor of St. Peter. The Bishops of Rome have from the very beginning, and in every subsequent century made use of their authority over the universal Church; the faithful, priests and bishops of all ages have submitted to that authority. Those refusing have always been looked upon as heretics. How could a consent of opinion like that be mistaken, although Holy Scripture does not clearly state that Peter established his see in Rome?

Whilst at the present moment the sees occupied by the other Apostles have all disappeared, the see of Peter with its glorious prerogatives still exists; Peter still lives, notwithstanding the storm of ages and through a long chain of 265 successors, in Pope Pius X now gloriously reigning.

119. *Q. Who are the successors of the other Apostles?*
A. The successors of the other Apostles are the Bishops of the Holy Catholic Church.

Just as St. Peter was to have a successor, so also were the other Apostles to have successors unto the consummation of the world. The Bishops take the places of the Apostles; they have the same charge, the same authority and power as the present needs of Christ's Church demand. They have the same ordinary power, but not the extraordinary, granted personally to the Apostles as first founders of the Church. The Apostles in their mission to establish the faith of Christ all over the world, needed special powers not now required by their successors, to whom the same mission is not entrusted. The Bishops are not commissioned to go over the whole world and preach the gospel to every creature. The particular prerogative of the Apostles, not communicable to their successors, consisted in this:

1st, that each apostle was infallible in preaching the doctrine of Christ, and 2nd, that each of them had the right without further authorization to establish everywhere episcopal sees, to preach the Gospel everywhere, and to rule the faithful. The Apostles had also received many personal favors, which were not necessary to be bequeathed to their successors; they had received the gift of tongues and miracles, they were confirmed in grace; which cannot be said of the Bishops. In as far as Christ appointed the Apostles as Bishops to rule over His Church, they have their successors in the Bishops. Wherein consists the power of the Bishops? They have, first, the right to teach the faith in the diocese assigned to them by the Pope. Although the Bishop is not infallible in this, yet he has the divine mission of teaching, and the faithful are obliged to accept his doctrine, unless he is certainly in the wrong. Secondly, they have the right in their respective dioceses to frame laws, to judge and to punish; they also enjoy full jurisdiction in the administration of the sacraments in their dioceses, yet subject, like the rest of the faithful, to the supremacy of the Pope. Thirdly, they are also called to participate in the government of the universal Church, viz: to discuss in a general council the universal welfare of the Church, and in common with the Pope to decide points of faith and morals affecting the universal Church. They receive their authority, not directly from God like the Pope, but indirectly through the Pope. Therefore he who would presume to receive episcopal consecration without the sanction of the Pope, although he would receive the plenitude of the priesthood, is in no way a successor of the Apostles, and would not be entitled to a share in any of the powers conferred on the Bishops; such a one would be excommunicated, and therefore would not even belong to the Church.

120. *Q. Why did Christ found the Church?*

A. Christ founded the Church to teach, govern, sanctify and save all men.

The Council of the Vatican explains in the following terms the end which Christ had in view by founding His Church: "The eternal Shepherd and Bishop of our souls, in order to make the salutary work of the Redemption perpetual, resolved to found the holy Church, in which, as in

the house of the living God, all the faithful would be united by the bonds of one faith and charity."

It was for a twofold purpose that Christ founded the Church: 1st, to preserve and dispense the true religion, and secondly, to save all men. The preservation of religion means that faith and the Sacraments which Christ intended to be the great means to procure the salvation of men, may ever be preserved without corruption. "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." The dispensing of religion means that the faith be preached and the Sacraments administered. These two are really the only ends, the only mission of the Church, which is a continuation and perpetuation of the mission of Christ Himself.

This purpose is proved, first, from the mission of Christ. Christ was sent to save the world by means of His religion; therefore His great or rather His only institution, the Church, must have the same end, viz: to save men to the end of time through the religion of Christ. Secondly, the mission of the Church has been clearly indicated by Christ Himself. "As the Father hath sent Me, I also send you" (John 20:21). "Going therefore, teach ye all nations baptizing them. . . . Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you" (Mat. 28: 19, 20). St. Paul sets forth the same doctrine: "If I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the Church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth" (1 Tim. 3:15). Thirdly, the Catholic Church has always recognized this to be the end of her existence. The whole of ecclesiastical history is one grand testimony of the care and solicitude of the Church to preserve intact the deposit of faith, and to procure the salvation of souls by the administration of the sacraments and the faithful observance of the Christian religion.

As Christ willed His Church should be a well organized society, with authority as its foundation, it is clear that this authority was not to be an empty name. The Catechism says that Christ founded His Church also to govern men. Governing means authoritatively to direct the actions of men and societies. Christ imparted or delegated His authority as Head of the Church to the Apostles. His authority extended not only over His few followers, but

over all men and all societies of men, over republics and empires. The authority of the Church extends by delegation to all of them. Therefore rulers and nations are subject to the laws of the Church, as they are subject to the laws of Christ. Opposing her authority is opposing Christ; persecuting her is persecuting Christ. This doctrine may appear strange to one not acquainted with the constitution of the Church; but for one who knows that the Church is the continuation of the work of our Redemption, that she is endowed with the authority of Christ, it is but natural to conclude that she is the highest authority on earth; the only one to decide infallibly in God's name, in all that pertains to the salvation of mankind, that is, in matters of faith and morals.

The Catechism further states that Christ also founded the Church to sanctify all men; not only to confer on them, by virtue of the Sacraments, the grace of sanctification but also to make them holy. A great many helps have been entrusted to the Church not merely in order to save men, but also to sanctify them. The evangelical counsels were no commands, but were meant to be means to further holiness. The aim of the Church is to aid her children to attain that eminent degree of holiness, whereby they may be found worthy to occupy the thrones in heaven, vacated by the fallen angels.

121. *Q. Are all bound to belong to the Church?*

A. All are bound to belong to the Church, and he who knows the Church to be the true Church and remains out of it cannot be saved.

The fourth Council of Lateran declared it to be a dogma of Catholic belief that there is but one universal Church of the faithful, out of which no one can be saved. The Church is necessary, that is, all are obliged by divine command to belong to it and to be members of its mystic body. The necessity of the Church may be considered either in its institution, or in regard to us, in our belonging to it. We have seen before that the Church of Christ is the religion of Christ considered as a reality. As in the order of Providence the religion of Christ has been deemed necessary, so also is the Church of Christ a necessary institution. In the second case, we look upon the Church as the necessary means to salvation, and we claim that out of

her there is no salvation. It must be well understood, however, that this applies only to those who remain out of her through their fault, and therefore do not belong either to the soul or to the body of the Church.

The obligation of belonging to the true Church of Christ is plain. Christ told His Apostles: "Go ye into the whole world, and preach the Gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized, shall be saved" (Mark xvi, 15). Baptism is requisite for salvation, but by Baptism we enter the Church; the two therefore are inseparable. "No man cometh to the Father but by Me" (John xiv, 6); in other words no one goes to heaven except by observing My religion, by belonging to My Church.

There is an undeniable divine command, that all men should profess the true religion of Christ. As we have seen, the true religion is not to be found except in the true Church, which Christ founded to be the only depository and teacher of His religion; therefore all men are, by a divine command, bound to belong to the Church. From this it also follows that the second part of the answer of the Catechism is true, viz: that out of the Church there is no salvation. Because if we wilfully neglect to obey a divine command of such importance, there can certainly be no salvation. St. Paul tells us that "some have made shipwreck concerning the faith, of whom is Hymeneus and Alexander, whom I have delivered up to Satan, that they might learn not to blaspheme" (I Tim. i, 19). St. Paul insinuates that those who give up or fall away from the true faith, are blasphemers, have fallen out of the bark of the Church, and will perish in the waves, unless they return to the Church after having made sufficient atonement. St. Cyprian tells us that, just as out of the ark of Noah there was no salvation from the waters of the deluge, so also there can be no salvation out of the Church.

This doctrine is practically confirmed by all the denominations claiming to be Christian. Some have so distorted the fundamental principles of Christianity as to extend their approval and communion to many opposing sects. If one religion is as good as another to be saved, why keep up the difference? Each of the sects practically starts from the assumption that it is the true church, and that out of it there is no salvation. A foreigner by the mere fact of his entering the territory of the United States is

not granted the privileges of a citizen; certain formalities of naturalization have to be gone through; to be a citizen of the kingdom of God in heaven, one must be a member of His mystical body on earth.

The Catholic Church, because of her dogma just explained, is accused of intolerance; nothing could be more absurd than this charge. The Church does not pretend and never did pretend to make salvation any more difficult than Christ made it. Whilst excluding all indifferentism and refusing to admit that in contraries and contradictions one thing is as good as another, the Church opens the gates of salvation on far easier terms than is generally supposed. She claims that any one being duly baptized in any denomination by any man, were the latter even a Jew, and keeps the laws of God, dies without mortal sin, will be saved, and that when the baptism of water cannot be administered to one who is duly disposed, the baptism of desire takes its place. This admission does not contradict the doctrine explained above, for all these belong to the soul of the Church of Christ. But the Church holds also that when a man has a reasonable doubt as to which is the true Church, and wilfully neglects to enquire and clear his doubt, that there is no hope of salvation for him, for he remains wilfully out of the Church. There is still less hope for one who *knows* the Catholic Church to be the true Church of Christ, but wilfully remains out of it.

LESSON TWELFTH

ON THE ATTRIBUTES AND MARKS OF THE CHURCH

122. *Q. Which are the attributes of the Church?*
A. The attributes of the Church are three; authority, infallibility and indefectibility.

The Catechism in this lesson makes a difference between the attributes and the marks of the Church. In general by attribute may be understood whatever is in a being besides its essence; it means then the same as property or perfection. A property may be either accidental or necessary. Accidental properties are those which may or may not belong to a being, and yet leave the essence intact; such is the property of a thing being large or small. Necessary properties are those which are so connected with the being, that they must be present, in order that the being may be actually what it is; for instance, it is necessary for the human body to have a certain temperature, circulation of the blood, respiration, etc. Attributes, therefore, are not the essence of a being. The attributes of the Church, however, are so necessary to it, that we could not form an idea of the Church of Christ without them. This applies also to the marks of the Church. Most theologians treat of the attributes and marks of the Church without making any material distinction between them. To those who wish to know the difference, we say that it consists in this, that the marks are outward manifestations of the properties attributed by Christ to the Church. The Catechism gives three attributes, others may be added, such as: necessity and visibility; but the three above enumerated are sufficient to give us a clear conception of the essence of the Church, and to show us that it is a unique institution in this world, one that never decays with age, one that is essentially to-day what Christ made it nineteen centuries ago. It has passed through the ravages of time without spot or wrinkle, and will continue unto the end to be what it is now.

123. *Q. What do you mean by the authority of the Church?*

A. By the authority of the Church I mean the right and power, which the Pope and the Bishops, as the successors of the Apostles, have to teach and to govern the faithful.

We have made it sufficiently clear in the preceding pages, that in the Church, as in every organized society, there must be authority. The Catechism now proceeds to explain wherein this authority consists and resides. As the Church is the depository and dispenser of salvation, she must be endowed with such powers as are requisite for the fulfilment of her mission. The mission entrusted to the Church is threefold, first, to preach the faith: "Teach ye all nations" (Mat. xxviii, 19); secondly, to administer the Sacraments: "Baptizing them" (Ibid.); "Ministers of Christ and dispensers of the mysteries of God" (I Cor. iv, 1); thirdly, to see to her own preservation and government: "Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you" (Mat. xxviii, 20) . . . "even to the consummation of the world" (Ibid.). To this threefold mission responds also the threefold power and right of teaching, administering and governing. This is the power abstractly considered; considered such as it exists in reality, this power was not given to the whole body of the Church, so that all the faithful could claim it; but it was entrusted only to a few chosen persons, viz: to the twelve Apostles and their successors. Christ divided the Church into two orders, viz: those whom He sent and those to whom He sent them; teachers and pupils, baptizers and people to be baptized, rulers and subjects. If Protestants grant any authority at all, they look upon it, not as divine, but only as human and of social necessity. They claim for their ministers no other power than that which they receive from the people or temporal rulers; they hold that the people has a right to divest them of that authority, whenever it pleases and to reduce them to the rank of the common faithful. Catholic belief teaches us that it is not so with us; no spiritual right or power is derived from or through the people; it comes from God only, either directly as that of the Pope, or indirectly as that of the Bishops and priests. Power here does not stand for a mere license

to preach; it is a right creating in men the obligation to hear. The Church has the power, not only to teach and to administer the Sacraments, but also to govern, that is, to make her own laws and to enforce them on all those who belong to her, all those who have entered her fold by Baptism. Furthermore, these laws govern and direct all Christian societies, as well as all individuals, so that no human Christian authority can oppose or dissolve these laws without encroaching or trespassing, at the same time, on the laws of God. This threefold power and right is clearly proved from Scripture: "Teach ye all nations." . . . "Preach the gospel to every creature." . . . "Behold I am with you." "He that heareth you, heareth Me" (Luke x, 16); "Commanding we commanded you, that you should not teach in this name, and behold you have filled Jerusalem with your doctrine. But Peter and the Apostles answering said: We ought to obey God rather than men" (Acts v, 28). This power of teaching was used by the Apostles in their epistles; after them the governing body of the Church has at all times claimed and exercised the same right.

The power of administering the sacraments is equally clear: "Do this for a commemoration of Me" (Luke xxii, 19); "As the Father hath sent Me, I also send you" (John xx, 21); "Whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven them" (Ibid. 23); "Let a man so account of us, as of the ministers of Christ, and the dispensers of the mysteries of God" (I Cor. vi, 1).

The power and the right to govern the faithful is just as evident: "I will give to thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt bind upon earth, it shall be bound also in heaven" (Mat. xvi, 19); "Whatsoever you shall bind on earth, shall be bound also in heaven" (Mat. xviii, 18); "If he will not hear the Church, let him be to thee as the heathen and the publican" (Ibid. 17). "Feed My lambs, Feed My sheep" (John xxi, 15). "Take heed to yourselves and to the whole flock, wherein the Holy Ghost hath placed you Bishops to rule the Church of God, which He hath purchased with His own blood" (Acts xx, 28).

The above texts all prove that these powers were given immediately to the Apostles, to the exclusion of the other faithful; but these powers were not to die out with the

Apostles, as is clear from the fact that Christ sends the Apostles to *every* creature and promises to be with them in their work even to the *consummation of the world.* This proves that Christ makes the Apostles, who were physically mortal, morally immortal, that they might live with these same powers in their successors till the end of the world. The reason why these powers were granted to them will always remain the same, viz: the preservation of the Christian religion and of the Church. The Apostles therefore transmitted their power to their successors, as these will do to those who follow them. "For this cause," so writes St. Paul to Titus, "I left thee in Crete, that thou shouldst set in order the things that are wanting, and shouldst ordain priests in every city, as I also appointed thee" (i, 5).

124. *Q. What do you mean by the infallibility of the Church?*

A. By the infallibility of the Church I mean that the Church cannot err when it teaches a doctrine of faith and morals.

Since Christ sent His Apostles to teach all nations, and imposed on all men the obligation of embracing the faith they preached, and of belonging to the religion of Christ, to the Church founded by Him, it would seem self-evident that this guide of men should in matters of faith and morals be a perfectly safe guide, one forever free from error and even from liability to err in these matters. How could God require all men to submit their intelligence blindly to its teaching, if there were no absolute certainty of immunity of the Church from error? Faith removes all doubt regarding its object; believing firmly and doubting are opposed to each other; to remove *all* doubt, *all* hesitation, our intellect demands more than a moral certainty. No man or union of men can be infallible of themselves, as experience proves even in the natural sciences. The object of faith far exceeds man's reason; infallibility in matters appertaining to faith cannot then be any man's natural or acquired property. This prerogative of the Church is a gift of God to her, and is to last as long as her mission on earth, that is, to the end of time. Non-Catholics, while recognizing theoretically the necessity of a sure guide in matters of faith, have substituted to the guide given the faithful by Christ Himself, a thing which

God never intended to be the guide of the faithful, for its most important part did not yet exist, when Christ ascended into heaven. They rely upon the Bible and the Bible only. Whilst Catholics, like the great St. Augustine, believe that the Bible is the inspired word of God, because the infallible Church says so; they do not consider the Bible, privately interpreted, as a safe and sufficient guide or authority in matters of faith. Christ never intended that they should. If He had, He would have seen to it, that when He left this world to return to His Father, this guide would have been ready, and would have given it to the Apostles to distribute, instead of commanding them merely to *preach* the Gospel. The Church was His work and was perfect. At the time of Christ's glorious ascension the New Testament, the most important part of the Bible, was not yet written. His Church would continue to exist, even if all the copies of the Bible were to disappear; the Church existed in the beginning many years without the New Testament, and could continue to exist without it to the end. If the Bible was not then necessary, neither is it so now, because the Church, as founded by Christ without the Bible, has from Him the promise of existence unto the consummation of the world. Catholics believe not in the authority of the Bible only, but more especially in the authority of Christ's infallible Church, which alone He empowered to teach His doctrine, and which has, therefore, alone the divine right to declare the meaning of His word, the Holy Bible

Infallibility of the Church means immunity from error in her teaching as well as in her belief, for belief follows teaching; an infallible belief must follow an infallible teaching. The Church is the lawful and divinely chosen witness to the truth which she received directly from Christ Himself in the person of the Apostles; she is the judge in all controversies concerning faith, she is the teacher of all nations. This infallibility is not the outcome of the learning of the teaching body, but of the special aid of the Holy Ghost, who enlightens the mind of the teachers. Thereby, however, the teaching body does not become the medium of a new revelation, for there is and can be no new revelation since Christ, but it is divinely assisted to understand clearly what Christ has revealed, and to declare rightly the meaning of that revelation.

The infallibility of the Church in teaching is clearly

shown in Scripture: "Teach ye all nations." . . . "Behold I am with you (teaching) all days even to the consummation of the world." Christ's continual presence with the Apostles and their successors concerns their teaching. How could truth and error stand together? He is, as He promised, with them continually; therefore they cannot err; this inference is quite logical. "I will ask the Father, and He shall give you another Paraclete, that He may abide with you forever. . . . He will teach all things" (John xiv, 16, 26). The Apostles, the teaching Church, were taught all things necessary to salvation and the preservation of the Christian religion; the Holy Ghost, the Spirit of truth, remains with them forever. His continual assistance must necessarily prevent error. The Holy Ghost was to teach the Apostles all truth; this includes *all* matters of faith and morals. The above texts mention truth or faith only, but as the faith of Christ must be practical and creates the obligation of conforming our actions to it, both faith and morals are the object of the infallibility of the Church. In this teaching there will never be anything new, because the whole revealed truth is the deposit of faith entrusted to the Church. "Know," says St. Paul to Titus, "how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the Church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth" (iii, 15). The Church is the firm pillar, the solid ground of the truth. As truth never changes and can never become error, so also the Church can never be or become the pillar of error; unto the end she will teach the truth which she has received from Christ.

125. *Q. When does the Church teach infallibly?*

A. The Church teaches infallibly, when it speaks through the Pope and Bishops united in general Council, or through the Pope alone when he proclaims to all the faithful a doctrine of faith and morals.

The most absurd notions are entertained by the majority of non-Catholics in regard to infallibility. To some it seems to mean omniscience, to others omnipotence, whilst others assert it to mean impeccability, or sinlessness. Infallibility is not impeccability. The Apostles were infallible; after the descent of the Holy Ghost they were confirmed in grace, and could not sin mortally and yet they were not impeccable.

They were sinners and had to say with us: "Forgive us our trespasses," they could sin venially. Of one alone amongst all mankind, in the order of pure creatures, can it be said: "She was impeccable." The Blessed Virgin was, by a special privilege of God, preserved from every stain of sin. It does not therefore hurt our faith, if, among those for whom we claim infallibility, are found a few who were not distinguished for the moral excellence of their lives. Infallibility is again not omniscience or omnipotence, for these qualities are divine and not communicable to men. Infallibility is immunity from error, and this, as the Catechism explains in this question, with certain restrictions, applies either to the teaching body, or to the Pope and Bishops in a general Council; non-Catholics willingly admit that. Catholics claim infallibility for the Pope, in his official capacity; because St. Peter was made infallible by Christ, this prerogative must have come down to his successors. We will consider that infallibility as applied to the Pope. He is not immune from error in his every action of the day. The infallibility of the Pope means immunity from error in his teaching capacity only. As a private individual, he may make mistakes like others. His infallibility or immunity from error in teaching is limited to faith and morals, and this only when he, as head of the Church, makes an official definition in these matters; he is then said to speak *"ex Cathedra,"* as teacher officially teaching the Church. The Council of the Vatican explains what is meant hereby: "The Pope teaches *ex cathedra* when discharging his office of Pastor and teacher of all Christians, in virtue of his supreme apostolic authority, he defines a doctrine concerning faith and morals to be held by the whole Church." He must be addressing not this or that particular portion of the Church, but the entire Church, and he must do this not as giving his views, but with the intention of using his supreme teaching authority requiring every one to accept and assent to his definition. We do not claim for the Pope a special inspiration of the Holy Spirit, but a special assistance and help, whereby the Holy Ghost does not permit the Pontiff to err in the definition and promulgation of revealed truth. The past history of the Church shows that among the successors of St. Peter there have been saints and sinners; but it cannot be shown that any Pope, were he a saint or a sinner, has ever erred,

when teaching *ex cathedra.* Like Peter, so are also his successors commissioned to confirm their brethren in the faith. The Bible and Christian Tradition unanimously acknowledge this privilege. And what is more, the Popes have given thousands of decisions in these matters and have never contradicted each other; and, as it is human to err, and daily experience shows how men constantly contradict each other, in matters not above reason, the perfect agreement of the Popes in divine matters practically proves them to be guided by the Holy Ghost.

126. *Q. What do you mean by the indefectibility of the Church?*

A. By the indefectibility of the Church I mean that the Church, as Christ founded it, will last till the end of time.

Christ commands all men to enter the Church founded by Him; those who wilfully remain out of her pale, suffer spiritual shipwreck on the stormy ocean of the world, and will never enter the haven of Salvation. From the necessity of that Church, to which Christ commands all men to belong, may be argued the attribute of the Church, which we call indefectibility. Indefectibility includes not only perpetuity in duration, but also unchangeableness, that is, the Church must not only last to the end of time, but it must also at all times be such, as Christ founded it. The perpetuity of the Church is clearly proved from Scripture: "The Lord God shall give unto Him the throne of David, His Father, and He shall reign in the house of Jacob forever: And of His kingdom there shall be no end" (Luke i, 32). The kingdom of Christ in the world is the Church. "The gates of hell shall not prevail against it" (Mat. xvi, 18); no limitation of time is given; therefore the gates of hell shall *never* prevail against the Church; the Church on earth shall continue to exist until time shall cease to be. "Behold I am with you," says Christ, "all days, even to the consummation of the world" (Mat. xxviii). How could the perpetuity of the Church be more clearly expressed? The special presence of Christ can apply only to the Church, which is to last as long as the world will stand. The words of Christ would have no meaning, if not so understood. The Apostles were not to remain on earth up to the consummation of the world; on the other

hand, Christ will remain with them even after that event. The perpetual presence of Christ with the Apostles and those that would follow them supposes and clearly explains the perpetuity of the Church.

The Church is the embodiment of the religion of Christ; none will deny the perpetuity of the Christian religion, and therefore we must admit that the Church will necessarily last as long as the Christian religion will be preached and professed, that is, unto the end of time.

Indefectibility also includes, as we stated, unchangeableness. That the Church is unchangeable and must be so, is clear beyond all doubt. The Church, which is to last unto the end of the world, must be the one founded by Christ, and be such as Christ founded it, without any essential difference or change; this being so, the Church must needs be unchangeable, as otherwise, it would not be the Church founded by Christ. There are in the Church many changes in matters of ceremonial or discipline, for it must be the Church of all times; discipline adapts itself to the difference of times and nations; but these matters do not constitute the essence of the Church. In as far as faith and morals are concerned, the Church must be to-day as it came from the hands of her Maker. The Church is the religion of Christ; but the religion of Christ, being truth is subject to no changes, therefore, neither can the Church be. If the Christian religion could be changed into something more perfect, this could happen only in the supposition that the Apostles preached imperfectly and delivered it full of imperfections to their successors, or because Christ imperfectly designed it; neither hypothesis is admissible, as numerous texts of Scripture prove. The dogmas of the Christian religion can neither be increased, nor diminished. This could certainly not be done without the authority of Christ; but such an authority has never been and will never be committed to any one. He has not given the Apostles that power, because He commissioned them only to promulgate and guard His Gospel, ordering them to teach all men to keep whatsoever He had commanded them.

The Apostles had no right to change what had been delivered to them, "and though we," says St. Paul, "or an angel from heaven preach a Gospel to you, besides that which we have preached to you, let him be anathema" (Gal. i, 8).

The admission of the attributes of the Church is a condemnation of all Protestant sects. The following simple argument must convince any sincere non-Catholic of his error. Christ founded only one Church, as He founded only one religion; this Church must exist to the end of the world, it can never change; hence it is as good now as it was at the time of Christ. A church, therefore, which began centuries after Christ had left the world, cannot be the Church of Christ and must necessarily be false.

127. *Q. In whom are these attributes found in their fulness?*

A. These attributes are found in their fulness in the Pope, the visible Head of the Church, whose infallible authority to teach bishops, priests and people in matters of faith or morals will last to the end of the world.

The Church is the kingdom of God upon earth, a copy of the heavenly kingdom. It has been given sovereign power, the basis and support of its unity. As the Church is the work of Christ, so is also its constitution the work of Christ, at least in its essential points. He chose His Apostles, the Apostles did not choose Him. The ecclesiastical hierarchy is, then, not the work of man, or the consequence of historical development, still less the result of a usurpation; it comes from God, like the hierarchy of the Old Testament. As Jesus Christ was not sent by the Apostles, but by His Father only, that He might afterwards send all the others, so also it is not the family who chooses its head, but the head who founds the family; neither does or can the great family of the faithful appoint its head and its pastors. If the Church is one fold, there must be one chief shepherd; if the Church is a visible body, there must be a visible head. As long as Christ remained on earth, He was the head; but before He left, after giving to His Apostles powers to be handed down to their successors, He had already chosen one of them to be the foundation of His Church. He gave to Peter the keys of the kingdom of heaven, so that what he should bind or loose on earth, should be bound or loosed in heaven. Immediately after the Ascension of Christ, Peter enters upon his sovereign duties;

he completes the number of Apostles and preaches to the people, he works the first miracle, presents himself the first before the Sanhedrin, visits all the churches; on account of a special revelation he is the first to bring the Gospel to the Gentiles. He presides at the Council of Jerusalem, excommunicates Simon, the first heretic. He approves the writings of St. Paul. Many other proofs are given in Holy Scripture of his superiority over the other Apostles. The primacy of Peter, as it was destined to found and maintain unity in the Church, must have the necessary attributes of permanent duration through all ages. His authority was given him in the Church and for the Church, or, as St. Augustine explains it, power was not given him personally, but to the Church through him, so it could not die out with him. Peter is the depositary of supreme authority in the Church and this authority must last as long as the Church itself. Peter is the shepherd of the whole fold of Christ, so his ministry must extend to all times and all places. The Pope is the successor of St. Peter; the same authority has been given to him; hence he is the visible head of the Church; the three great attributes of the Church must therefore be found in all their fulness in him. The Pope is the one living personal representative of the great principle of authority, which alone is capable of preserving the unity of faith and directing towards its last end the activity of all the orders, of all the members of the Church. No kingdom of the world furnished the model of this wonderful constitution of the Church, no city, no state will ever attain its perfection. The Church is essentially a monarchy, because one person wields the plenitude of power, one commands all, and all obey him. The Catechism therefore very reasonably says, that the three attributes of the Church, viz: authority, infallibility and indefectibility are found in their fulness in the Pope. In the Pope is centered supreme authority, he is infallible as we have explained before, and he will be unto the end of time what St. Peter was in his official capacity. The enemies of the Church have tried all means inspired and urged on by hell, to destroy the Papacy, but in vain. Pius X is to-day to the Church of Christ, what the long line of his predecessors have been in the past. As the gates of hell shall never prevail against the Church, so shall they never prevail against the Papacy.

128. *Q. Has the Church any marks, by which it may be known?*

A. The Church has four marks by which it may be known: it is One, it is Holy, it is Catholic, it is Apostolic.

In the preceding pages we have treated of some of the attributes of the Church. The Catechism now treats of the marks of the Church. An attribute, as we have explained, is a quality inherent in the nature of a thing; so is intelligence an attribute of man; infallibility in expounding the doctrine of Christ an attribute of the Church and of the Pope; marks or signs are things that lead us to the knowledge of things, which we cannot directly know; therefore the marks of the Church are outward qualities, by which we can know with certainty, that she is the true Church of Christ; we say outward qualities, because it is only by external signs, that we can know the true Church of Christ, which is a visible society. Hence it follows that the marks are also attributes, but not all attributes are marks. The Catechism speaks of four marks only; some theologians mention a few more, but these four are the principal. Bellarmine in his great work against the heretics of his day, treats of fifteen, which, however, may be reduced to the four. They are as follows: The name itself of the Church, Catholic, antiquity, duration, ampleness, succession of Bishops, oneness in doctrine, union of members among themselves and with their head, holiness of doctrine, efficacy of doctrine, holiness of the first Fathers of our religion, glory of miracles, light of prophecy, confessions of our adversaries, unfortunate end of its persecutors, temporal happiness of its defenders.

Lactantius, a Christian writer, who flourished in the beginning of the fourth century, could write in his day: "It is only the Catholic Church, which retains the true worship. Here is the fountain of truth, this is the dwelling-place of faith, this is the temple of God, wherein if any one enter not, or wherefrom if any one depart, he gives up life and eternal salvation. And yet all and every gathering of heretics consider themselves the real Christians, and their church the Catholic Church." How true are not these words even in our days, when hundreds of dissenting bodies try to make themselves believe, that they represent the true Church of Christ. They realize that the four marks which

manifest the true Church to every impartial observer or inquirer, do not apply to their churches. To obviate that difficulty, they have invented for themselves other marks, which even they cannot rightfully claim. Luther, to cover up his apostacy, proclaimed these seven; the true and incorrupt preaching of the Gospel, the lawful administration of baptism, the lawful use of the keys, the lawful election of ministers to teach and administer the sacraments, public praying and singing, but in a language understood by all, the mystery of the cross, that is, internal and external tribulations. But strange to say, the signs invented by him do not apply to the church of his own making. How can there be a true preaching of the gospel, when leaving out the true Church and the true doctrine of Christ? What right have his successors to take up the Eucharist and the keys, when they have no priests to administer them? It is evident that since Christ imposed on all the most serious obligation of belonging to His Church (Question 121), He must have made it possible for people to know it, and to know it easily. Which is Christ's Church, cannot be answered otherwise than by indicating its marks. It is equally clear that those marks must infallibly point out the Church of Christ, otherwise they would not be true marks, and they would be worse than no marks at all, if they could lead us into error. The marks must be such, that they make the Church apparent to the unlearned as well as to the learned, that no great theological exertion may be needed to show which object they indicate. The four marks are clearly proved from Scripture and Tradition, and we may add, reason clearly designates the Catholic Church as the true Church of Christ, and this beyond the shadow of a doubt. In the following pages we shall prove that the Church of Christ must be and is one, holy, Catholic and Apostolic, and that the only Church which can lay claim to these four marks is the Catholic Church. Never has any thoughtful enquirer in good faith failed to see them and recognize by them the Church out of which there is no salvation.

129. *Q. How is the Church one?*

A. The Church is one because all its members agree in one faith, are all in one communion and are all under one head.

The unity of the Church consists in this that, like a liv-

ing individual, it excludes plurality and division; it embraces therefore oneness and union. The fact of its being one excludes plurality of churches, either simultaneously or successively. Union excludes division and consists in all the parts being so connected as to form one whole and to be entirely undivided in itself in time and place. The unity of the Church, in as far as the Church itself is concerned, is made up of the unity of faith, unity of cult or worship and unity of government. Unity of faith consists in all the members agreeing in one and the same faith; unity of cult consists in all being in one communion, or in having one and the same sacrifice and the same Sacraments; unity of government consists in all being under one head, in all recognizing one supreme authority, by which the whole body is ruled and governed. The unity of the Church will be entirely undivided in regard to time and place, if the Church through all ages, in all countries has invariably appeared the same in faith, cult and government, just as the sun is seen to be always the same, perpetually spreading its light over all parts of the world. Knowing what is here meant by unity we must now prove that unity is a mark of the Church. The proof of it is very simple. Unity is a mark of the Church, if Christ willed that His Church should be one in faith, one in cult, one in government, whenever and wherever it should exist. Scripture and Tradition clearly prove this to be the case; therefore unity is a mark of the Church. The gathering of the followers of Christ is called the Church, as one, not the churches, as many. It is called an edifice, a temple, a house built by Christ Himself; it is called the kingdom of Christ, the body of Christ. Who does not remember the beautiful prayer of Christ for His disciples after the institution of the Holy Eucharist? "Holy Father keep them in My name whom Thou hast given Me; that they may be one as We also are . . . And not for them only do I pray, but for them also who through their word shall believe in Me, that they all may be one as Thou Father in Me and I in Thee, that they also may be one in Us; that the world may believe that Thou hast sent Me" (John 17:20, 21). How often is not the word *one* repeated in these few lines? Who shall dare deny that the prayer of Christ was heard? As He Himself says, its realization was to prove to men His divine mission. Hear what the great Apostle of the Gentiles says of this wonder-

ful unity: "Careful to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. One body and one Spirit, as you are called in one hope of your calling. One Lord, one faith, one baptism. One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all and in us all" (Eph. 4:3 et seqq). "We being many are one bread, one body, all that partake of one bread" (1 Cor. 10:17). Holy Scripture clearly sets forth in the above texts the unity of faith for all the members of the Church of Christ. It could not be otherwise, as faith is necessarily one, because God cannot contradict Himself. The members of that Church are all in one communion, because they are one body, partake of the same bread, entered the Church by the same door, Baptism, and have the same Sacraments, instituted by Christ, as Baptism, and have one and the same sacrifice. In the New Law there is a sacrifice and only one sacrifice. The Church of Christ is an organized body, having but one head. Christ appointed one head only, therefore all the members of His Church must be under that one head.

The Catechism does not here examine to which of the many so-called Christian churches this first mark, unity, belongs. The marks, wherever seen, must clearly point out the Church of Christ. Unity as a mark has been easily discernible in the true Church at all times and places during the long period of her existence. If at any time it could not have been, Christ must have broken His promise and abandoned His spouse. Who will venture to make such an assertion? The whole Christian Tradition is one continuous proof of this wonderful unity. We conclude with the beautiful words of the great St. Cyprian: "As there are many rays of the sun, and but one light; as there are many branches of a tree, and but one strength supported by a hardy root, and as from one fountain many streamlets can flow, the mass of water poured out by many is but one in its origin. Take a ray of the sun from a body, the light is not divided. Break a branch from a tree, the separated branch will not germinate again. Cut off a stream from its source, and it will dry up. So also the Church of the Lord, like the sun, sends forth its rays through the whole world, the same light shining everywhere; as a tree, it extends its numerous branches over the whole earth; and as a fountain, it widens the streams flowing from its source; and yet there is but one

head, one source, one mother wonderful in her fruitfulness. We are born of her, are nourished with her milk, are quickened by her spirit. The spouse of Christ cannot be adulterated; she is incorrupt and pure." Who will deny that unity is a mark plainly visible of the Church of Christ?

130. *Q. How is the Church Holy?*

A. The Church is holy, because its Founder Jesus Christ is holy; because it teaches a holy doctrine; invites all to a holy life; and because of the eminent holiness of so many thousands of its children.

The Church is called holy, very much as the tree is said to be fruitbearing. The tree is called so, because it has the nature and the strength to bring forth fruit, and also because in reality it brings forth fruit; so has the Church not only the strength to bring forth much fruit from Christ, its divine root, but it actually brings forth fruits of holiness of a wonderful variety. Holiness as applied to the Church is a property and mark, inasmuch as outward facts manifest that quality as inherent in the Church. The Church is holy in its Founder, holy in its constitution, holy in the end it proposes to attain, holy in the means selected to the end, holy in its members, by their practice of eminent virtue and the gift of miracles. The Church is holy and must be so, if Christ willed that she should be holy in her essence or constitution, and also that her members should appear before men as shining lights endowed with graces, eminent virtues, and even with the gift of miracles. An impartial enquirer with a moderate knowledge of Christ and His work will, without even consulting the books of Scripture, come to the conclusion that it must be so. Scripture clearly proves that it is so.

Christ is the founder and the Head of the Church; its constitution is the work of Christ, the end in view is the sanctification and salvation of men, the means are His divine doctrine and the Sacraments. It is self-evident that in all this the Church, by the will of its Founder, is and must be holy.

Christ also willed that its members should be endowed with grace, eminent virtues and the gift of miracles. The following texts will clearly prove that "Christ loved the Church, and delivered Himself up for it, that He might sanctify it, cleansing it by the laver of water in the word

of life, that He might present it to Himself a glorious Church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that it should be holy and without blemish" (Eph 5:25). The life alluded to by Christ is the life of the soul, sanctifying grace, which makes the soul pleasing in His sight. "I am come that they may have life, and may have it more abundantly" (John 10:10). "So let your light shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven" (Mat. 5:15). Numerous other texts could be adduced to show that grace and virtue must be the heritage of the members of Christ's mystic body.

Coming to particulars, Christ willed that His Church should be endowed with divine charity, with constancy even to the shedding of blood; and that the evangelical counsels of perfection, poverty, chastity and obedience, should be practised; and they are practised even now by those whom we call religious or regulars. The following texts will prove the presence of these marks of holiness in the Church of Christ. "A new commandment I give unto you: That you love one another, as I have loved you" (John 13:34). "In this we have known the charity of God, because He hath laid down His life for us, and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren" (1 John 3:16). "If thou wilt be perfect, go, sell what thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come follow Me" (Mat. 19:21). "There are eunuchs who made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven; He that can take, let him take it" (Mat. 19:12). In the true Church of Christ the virtues here alluded to must be practised, as otherwise the Church would not come up to Christ's requirements and expectation, and He would prove a false prophet. Lest holiness might be mistaken, and to make the mark of holiness more apparent, Christ willed that it should be still further proved by the gift of miracles, which must never fail in His Church: "Amen, amen, I say to you, he that believeth in Me, the works that I do, he also shall do, and greater than these shall he do" (John 14:12). In the last chapter of St. Mark, Christ mentions the signs, which shall follow them that believe in Him. In the Church of Christ there must be then true miracles, that is, events exceeding the powers of nature, brought about by God's direct intervention to seal the truth

of a dogma, or certify to the holiness of members belonging to Christ's mystic body.

131. *Q. How is the Church Catholic or universal?*

A. The Church is Catholic or universal, because it subsists in all ages, teaches all nations, and maintains all truth.

Catholic means universal; universal is not limited to one age, or to one nation, but extends through all times and to all nations. Universality is one of the distinctive marks of the Church of Christ. Scripture clearly proves it, reason itself demands it. Often does our Lord speak in His parables of His Kingdom as being continuous with the world. As for example: "He that sowed the good seed is the Son of Man. And the field is the world" (Mat. 13:37, 38). He prophesies: "And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in the whole world for a testimony to all nations, and then shall the consummation come" (Mat. 24:14). In the last chapter of St. Matthew, when sending forth His Apostles to conquer the world to the faith, He says: "Going therefore teach ye all nations . . . teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you; and behold I am with you all days even to the consummation of the world." Such too, is the teaching of the great Apostle of the Gentiles. In his epistle to the Romans (10) we find: "But all do not obey the Gospel. For Isaias saith: Lord, who hath believed our report? Faith then cometh by hearing; and hearing by the word of Christ. But I say, have they not heard? Yea, verily, their sound hath gone forth into all the earth and their words unto the ends of the whole world." In his letter to the Galatians (3), more clearly still does he drive home the same truth: "Christ hath redeemed us . . . That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Christ Jesus . . . There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female. For you are all one in Christ Jesus. And if you be Christ's, then are you the seed of Abraham, heirs according to the promise." From all these texts three different aspects of Catholicity stand forth. The Church of Christ must be Catholic or universal in its teaching. It must maintain all truth. It must teach all the truths that Christ revealed to His Church, according to the words,

"teaching them all things whatsoever I have commanded you." It must be Catholic in time, that is, it must extend in unbroken succession from the time of Our Lord to the end of the world, "And lo, I am with you all days even to the consummation of the world." It must be Catholic in extent or space. Its mission is to the whole world "Go ye and teach all nations." As the impartial enquirer watches the course of history after the first preaching of the Gospel, he is forcibly struck by the importance attached to the Catholicity of the Church. In pagan times religion was national. The Church of Christ aimed at breaking down this exclusiveness, and making all men realize that they are the children of one common Father. Christ's Church was for all, civilized and uncivilized, bondman and free, Jew and Gentile. St. Cyprian says when speaking of the Church of Christ: "Her name is Catholic, because she is spread all over the earth and stretches from end to end; because she universally and uninterruptedly teaches all the doctrine of faith necessary for man to know." Christian Tradition is unanimous in claiming this mark for the true Church. Reason itself tells us that it must be so. The following simple argument convinces us of it. The Church was founded to preserve the religion of Christ; for that purpose it is necessary that the Church should be universal. The faith must be kept all over the world, it must be preached to every creature, which, in fact cannot be done, if the Church is not universal. It must be the Church, not of one nation nor of one time, it must be the Church of the whole world, endeavoring to have all men to enter the one fold, of which Christ is the supreme Shepherd. In a following question we shall see to which church this mark applies.

132. *Q. How is the Church Apostolic?*

A. The Church is Apostolic, because it was founded by Christ on His Apostles, and is governed by their lawful successors, and because it has never ceased and never will cease to teach their doctrine.

The last of the four great and distinctive marks of the true Church of Christ is Apostolicity. As a mark of the Church it means, first, that the doctrine of the Apostles was received and inviolably guarded by her, and secondly, that there is a lawful succession of Pastors from the Apostles

to us, that it will continue to the end of the world. For this succession, however, to be Apostolic, it is not necessary that every part of the Church should be able to trace the succession of its Pastors to the Apostles themselves, it is sufficient that this succession be obtained mediately, that is, through the communion with at least one part of the Church, which can trace its succession directly to one of the Apostles, and if that fact is clear and has been held as such by the early Fathers, Scripture and Tradition will prove it to be so.

The Saviour spent three years in His public career, during which time He gathered around Him followers and disciples to whom He explained the truths of His Gospel. He chose twelve in particular to be His Apostles: "You have not chosen Me, but I have chosen you." To one of them He said: "Thou are Peter and upon this rock I will build My Church." No sooner had our Lord ascended into heaven and the Holy Ghost had descended upon the Apostles on the day of Pentecost, than these humble fishermen went forth to the world and preached Christ crucified, risen from the dead and ascended into heaven. This they could not have done in the name of Jesus, unless Jesus had authorized and empowered them to do so. Their very name implies that it was for this purpose that they were chosen. An Apostle means an ambassador. Even in His own life-time our Lord had sent them forth as His ambassadors. He had promised to them all, to Peter and the rest: "Whatsoever you shall bind upon earth, shall be bound also in heaven, and whatsoever you shall loose upon earth, shall be loosed also in heaven." But clearly this judicial power could not exist without a corresponding obedience on the part of the faithful. Furthermore He identifies Himself with His Apostles and declares that He will consider as done to Himself whatever is done to them: "He that receiveth you, receiveth Me" (Mark 10:40). "He that heareth you, heareth Me and he that despiseth you despiseth Me" (Luke 10:16). After the resurrection our Lord confers the powers previously promised: "Standing in the midst of the eleven, the doors being shut, He said: Peace be to you. As the Father hath sent Me, I also send you. When He had said this, He breathed on them and said to them: Receive ye the Holy Ghost. Whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven, and whose sins you shall retain, they are retained"

(John 20:21, 22). To Peter, by the sea of Tiberias, He gave power over the whole flock: "Feed My lambs, feed My sheep" (John 21). Just before the Ascension, He gave His Apostles power over the whole world, clothing them with His own power and giving them a divine mission: "All power is given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost, teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you and lo! I am with you all days even to the consummation of the world" (Mat. 28:18 et seqq). What Christ had received from the Father, that He communicated to the Apostles. They hold office among men as teachers, priests and leaders of the Church; they are Christ's vicegerents. They carry on the work of Christ on earth. As Christ preached to the poor, so they also are to preach to every creature; as Christ forgave sins, so they also are to forgive sins; as Christ took bread and wine and offered sacrifice, so also are they to offer up the clean oblation; as Christ confirmed His doctrine by wonders and miracles, so too, shall signs and wonders accompany their preaching. They go forth clad with the power of the Lord. After the descent of the Holy Ghost the Apostles act fearlessly. They quail not before the Sanhedrin; they rule the Church, appoint deacons and settle vexed questions. Christ had instituted with the Church the Apostolate as the type and pattern of all spiritual functions, such as, the preaching of the word, the administration of the Sacraments. The early Church fulfilled these ordinances of Christ to the letter. These institutions must also continue in the Church forever, because all of them are just as necessary now and in ages to come, as they were in Apostolic times. Christ promised to be with the Apostles, whom He was addressing, "all days even to the consummation of the world." The words uttered by our Lord cannot be applied to the Apostles personally; they were to die, to pass away, but their successors in the Apostolate were to carry on the great and glorious mission entrusted to them. The Apostles continue to live in their successors. Search the Epistles, and you will find an organization recognized by the Apostles. Superiors are maintained, members of the Church are commanded to obey their teaching and correction, Bishops and deacons are named. In the

Acts it is related that Paul and Barnabas ordained priests for the faithful in every church. Timothy and Titus are by prayer and the imposition of hands constituted by St. Paul as God's plenipotentiaries. St. Paul tells Timothy, how Bishops are to be chosen; he writes the same to Titus. The Apostles neither could nor would leave the flock entrusted to them without shepherds, nor the Church without teachers and rulers. Hence the Church is Apostolic, not only because it is founded on the Apostles, but also because the Apostolic office survives in her in their lawful succession, teaching the same doctrine as the Apostles. In the true Church then, as is evident, there must be Apostolic succession. Which of all the churches is the one that can claim for its rulers Apostolic succession? The one that can, is marked out as the true Church of Christ.

133. *Q. In which Church are these attributes and marks found?*

A. These attributes and marks are found in the Holy Roman Catholic Church alone.

The attributes and marks of the Church of Christ, which we have explained in the preceding pages must necessarily be found in some church to-day, and cannot be found in more than one. It is an indisputable fact, that Christ founded a Church, that He willed this Church to last unto the end of time, and to be known by the same marks with which He sealed it. Christ, as the eternal truth, cannot contradict Himself, and hence cannot be the author of more churches than one. Which is that Church? The attributes and marks will make it known. If any of them be wanting to any denomination claiming to be the Church, it is just as unreasonable to call that church the true Church of Christ, as it would be to assert that a beast is a man, because some qualities are common to both men and beasts. As a matter of fact, however, none of the attributes and marks of the Church belong to any other than to the Holy Roman Catholic Church. A moment's reflection will convince us of it. We notice in all other churches the absence of these attributes and marks. *Authority.* In the other churches there is practically no authority, because those claiming it, have not received it from Him, from whom all authority is derived. They are not the successors of those, to whom Christ en-

trusted the guidance of the members of His flock. There is no supreme head to any of these hundreds of denominations, although Christ commissioned one to feed His lambs, and His Sheep. In the Catholic Church alone there is one head, the Pope of Rome, the successor of St. Peter; there are Bishops to take the places of the other Apostles; there are priests to fill the office of the seventy-two disciples. Their authority is recognized by all Catholics. *Infallibility.* No other Church than the Catholic Church ever has claimed in the past and claims now the prerogative of unerring teaching. All positively reject it, and yet as we have proved, Christ willed that His Church should be the pillar of truth, and that the gates of hell should never prevail against it. The Catholic Church has always claimed infallibility. Her supreme Pontiffs have, under certain conditions, been considered by the Christians of all times and places as infallible doctors of faith and morals. A few of them may not have been eminent for virtue, but never did they err in teaching *ex cathedra* a doctrine of faith, or proclaim a new doctrine; they only officially declared as the explicit belief of the Catholic world a doctrine held by the faithful since the days of the Apostles. *Indefectibility.* No other Church can trace back its origin to the days of Christ, therefore none of the other churches can be considered as the Church founded by Christ. The past history of the Catholic Church is a guarantee for the future. All the other Churches came too late and either died too early or are more or less in a dying state. We add a few extracts from Lord Macaulay's Essay on the Pope. Macaulay was a Protestant historian. "She (the Catholic Church) saw the commencement of all the governments, of all the ecclesiastical establishments that now exist in the world, and we feel no assurance that she is not destined to see the end of them all. Four times since the authority of the Church of Rome was established on Western Christendom, has the human intellect risen up against her yoke. Twice that Church remained completely victorious. Twice she came forth from the conflict bearing the marks of cruel wounds, but with the principle of life still strong within her. When we reflect on the tremendous assaults which she has survived, we find it difficult to conceive in what way she is to perish." The attributes are not found in any but the Catholic Church; none other can claim the marks.

Unity. In no other denominations is there *unity of faith.* It is in itself impossible, considering that the private interpretation of the Bible is the rule of faith of them all. This naturally leads to immense and essential differences of opinion among the members of the same church, so much so that Luther, in his day, said of his own followers, that there were as many opinions as there were heads. Men, even the very ministers, belonging to the same sect or church, do not even agree among themselves. For instance, in the Church of England some Bishops believe in the real presence, of which others scorn the very idea. In the Catholic Church the members are one in faith; they all without any exception, believe what the Church proposes to them to believe. In non-Catholic churches there is no *Unity* of *cult.* It is only of late years that the Church of England, to consider herself and appear as a branch of the Catholic Church, realized the necessity of a sacrifice and of sacrificing priests, but in vain; the chain of validly ordained priests has long been broken. All other churches abhor the idea of a sacrifice. And yet there must be a sacrifice, as otherwise the prophecy of Malachy would be false and the words of Christ at the Last Supper would be meaningless. In regard to the Sacraments, of the seven, instituted by Christ the majority of the sects have kept only one, Baptism; what they call the Lord's Supper is not a sacrament. The Catholic Church alone believes in seven Sacraments, instituted, the one like the other, by Christ, and in a sacrifice of the New Law, Holy Mass. In the Catholic Church alone is there *unity of government.* In all others there is plurality of heads; each individual church or congregation very often being independent and self-governed. In some the spiritual government of the church is absorbed by the temporal government of the state; in England, for instance, the sovereign is the spiritual head of the established church. In others the supreme authority rests with the presbytery, the synod or some other gathering of representatives of individual churches. Christ appointed one head, whom the Catholics call the Pope. Therefore unity applies to the Catholic Church only.

Holiness. No founder of any but the Catholic Church is holy. The Catholic Church has no other founder than Jesus Christ. Luther, the sacrilegious priest, unfaithful to his vow, assuredly was no saint; Calvin, branded for his

immorality, was no saint; Henry VIII, the murderer of his wives, was no saint. There may be and there actually are a great many good honest people in non-Catholic denominations, people who try to serve the Lord the best way they can, but this is not owing to the doctrine taught by their churches. That some are created for hell, that the grossest sins do not hurt the elect, that God is the author of sin, that faith alone justifies, that man is totally depraved and that all his works are sinful, that it is a matter of indifference which Christian religion you profess, all these tenets are not holy doctrines, and yet they are the foundations of the principal sects. If one were to live up to the fundamental tenets of these sects, he would be the reverse of a saint. The teaching of the Catholic Church, both in faith and in morals, is holy, inspiring her children with a love of perfection. It leads them to holiness of life, to practise all virtues, to abhor sin and to observe faithfully the commandments of God. It invites them all to a holy life and provides them all with plentiful means of protection in their endeavors to become holy. Eminent holiness, the fulfilling of the evangelical counsels is practised only by the children of the Catholic Church; there are no brotherhoods or sisterhoods binding themselves to Christ by poverty, chastity and obedience in any but the Catholic Church. Of those who tried in Anglicanism to live as religious, most of them failed in so doing, and others have become Catholics. Besides that great mark of eminent holiness, the gift of miracles is absent in all the other churches; the first miracle has yet to be wrought in any of them. The Catholic Church has never been without that gift. *Catholicity.* Although, says St. Augustine, all heretics wish to be called Catholic, yet no heretic, if asked by a stranger where is the Catholic Church, would dare to point to his own meeting-house or conventicle. Can any of the Protestant churches lay claim to the mark of Catholicity? First, are they Catholic as to time? Lutheranism, Calvinism, Anglicanism, parents of scores of other isms derived from them, all took their rise in the early part of the sixteenth century. Had God so deserted the Church He had founded, that for fifteen hundred years His disciples had to wait for such models as Luther, Calvin and Henry VIII to teach mankind the road to heaven? We know the founders of Protestant churches, history tells in what place and when they began the work

of the establishments, which bear their names. Not one amongst them can claim unbroken descent from the time of Christ. None but the Catholic Church is that old.

Has any of them taught all nations? Are they spread throughout the world? Have they striven to fulfil the divine commission to go and preach the Gospel to all nations? For quite 250 years and more no effort was made by any of them to convert the heathens abroad. It is only of late years that they have tried to imitate the Catholic missionaries, and even then, notwithstanding their immense resources, their missionary work has, on the whole, been a failure. The history of the attempts to convert the Indians of our own country is a record of a series of failures. Not so with the Catholic Church; witness the 280 millions of all classes and all people under the sun believing in the Holy Roman Catholic Church. Are the churches outside of the Catholic Church, Catholic in doctrine? Have they maintained all truth? The leading tenet of Luther's doctrine was a belief of justification by faith alone without works, in spite of the teaching of St. James, that faith without works is dead. He denied that man can do any good; he denied man's free will, and most boldly maintained that God excites us to sin and produces sin in us. He rejected continence with horror. Chastity was according to him an unpardonable sin. He rejected confession, fasting and all penance. Calvinism teaches that God caused the first man to fall into sin, that there might be a pretext for His wrath and a justification for punishment; that God set apart certain of His creatures, whom He doomed eternal punishment; that man falls, because an overmastering Providence maintains that he shall fall. Anglicanism terms the Sacrifice of the Mass, a blasphemous fable and dangerous deceit; rejected the Pope's spiritual supremacy, kept only two of the seven Sacraments, taught that Scripture is the sole rule of faith. All these denominations are in a chaotic state of spiritual anarchy and lawlessness, in which each one may practically believe as he pleases. And from these three the numerous churches or sects of to-day have sprung. Compare their belief to that of the primitive Church, and it will be clear, that they have but little of it. The Catholic Church is the only one that has always maintained and maintains the whole doctrine of Christ and of His Apostles.

Apostolicity. Are there any other churches, besides the Holy Roman Catholic Church, which can boast of being the lineal descendant of the Church of the Apostles? Do they boast of an unbroken chain of succession from St. Peter and St. Paul? Their mission, if they had any, must be either ordinary or extraordinary. If ordinary, it must be from the Church of Rome, or from some other, neither heretical nor schismatical. If from the Church of Rome the doctrine taught by it was either true or false. If true, what need to quit its bosom? If false, how could they learn the truth from her? If their mission was an extraordinary one, it must be upheld and proved by signs and wonders, so that mankind may be convinced that they are what they claim to be, messengers from Heaven. They all, of course, claim an extraordinary mission, but never have they furnished any proof of it. Proofs to the contrary are very numerous. The Reformation was anything but the work of Apostolic men. In England it was started by one who was the murderer of his wives, continued by the murderer of his brother, and perfected by the murderess of her guest. The work when completed by Edward VI (1552) left the Anglican Church without a priesthood and without an episcopate, except in name. The same almost applies to all the early reformers, each improving on his predecessor in the way of protesting, and leaving nothing behind them but a negation of most of the great dogmas entrusted by Christ to his Apostles. The Holy Roman Catholic Church alone has kept most solemnly and religiously all the truths, that Christ revealed; it preferred to lose entire nations, than to yield in her duty to God; witness the loss of England to the faith by the refusal of the Pope to dissolve the valid marriage of Henry VIII with Catherine of Aragon; it alone preserves the priesthood and the episcopate of the early Church of the Apostles. The four marks of the Church are plainly visible in the Holy Roman Catholic Church, that has preserved with marvellous unity the faith entrusted to her, sanctified the people of the world, is ever spreading the light of the Gospel truths throughout the nations, and proudly points to her long line of Bishops, stretching away in the far distant past to him to whom Christ said: "Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build My Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it, and to thee will I give the keys of the kingdom of heaven."

134. *Q. From whom does the Church derive its undying life and infallible authority?*

A. The Church derives its undying life and infallible authority from the Holy Ghost, the Spirit of truth, who abides with it forever.

The wonderful prerogatives of the Church, considered in the preceding pages, are the gift of God. No society of men could of itself have any claim to them; every human society tends of itself to disruption; every individual member is fallible, and so are all the members taken collectively. The Church's undying life and infallible authority are special gifts granted by God to His most perfect work on earth. The undying life of the Church is evidence to every student of genuine history, who remembers her past struggles from the cradle of Christianity up to our own times. Of all societies and institutions the Church has been the most persecuted; no other institution could have withstood any of these assaults. "When we reflect," as Macaulay says, "on the tremendous assaults she has survived, we find it difficult to conceive in what way she is to perish." We know that she never will, for Christ promised it. Her infallible authority must indeed proceed from one who is truth itself; no one else could impart to a finite intelligence immunity from error. The Catechism ascribes this undying life and infallible authority to the Holy Ghost in particular, although all the outward acts of the Blessed Trinity are common to the Three Divine Persons.

Christ promised to be with His Church unto the consummation of the world, when He commissioned His Apostles to preach the Gospel to every creature. Christ also promised His Apostles to ask the Father to give them another Paraclete, (John 14:16) that He might "abide with them forever, the Spirit of truth." "When He, the Spirit of truth is come, He will teach you all truth" (John 16: 17). The Holy Ghost is the Spirit of truth, because He is the author of all truth, He is the great teacher of it, who teaches all the truths necessary to salvation and free from all errors. Christ had told his Apostles: "I have yet many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now" (Ibid. 12). When leaving this world Christ as man left the further instruction of the Apostles to the Holy Ghost. The same Spirit of truth continues to be with the Church as He was

with the Apostles. He preserves its undying life by His sanctifying grace, making it always His spotless Bride, notwithstanding the faults and vices of some of its members. He could not be with it forever, if He did not safeguard its existence till the end of time. He is essentially the Spirit of truth, and as such, could never be with it, if it ever could teach error.

135. *Q. By whom is the Church made and kept One, Holy, and Catholic?*

A. The Church is made and kept One, Holy and Catholic by the Holy Ghost, the Spirit of love and holiness, who unites and sanctifies its members throughout the world.

As the Church owes its undying life and infallible authority to the Holy Ghost, so also it owes to Him its unity, its holiness, its universal propagation in the world, in gaining souls for the kingdom of Christ. The wonderful unity of the Church, not disturbed by any difference of nations or climes, cannot be the mere natural result of wills tending to the same end; but it must be the work of a higher cause preserving this wonderful unity. Numerous passages of Scripture clearly indicate it as the work of the Holy Ghost. St. Paul tells us (Eph. 4:4) that "we are one body and one Spirit;" it is the same Holy Spirit who brings life and spiritual motion to the members of that body. For "in one Spirit were we all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Gentiles, whether bond or free, and in one Spirit we have all been made to drink" (1 Cor. 12:13). The Holy Ghost animates the Church by His grace; by Him we are made partakers of the merits of Christ; through the Holy Ghost is realized the prayer and the desire of Christ that all those who believe in Him may be one. Holiness is particularly attributed to the Holy Ghost. He is the giver and promoter of that which constitutes the mark of holiness in the Church, because "The charity of God is poured forth in our hearts by the Holy Ghost" (Rom. 5:5). Charity is the beginning of the spiritual life and also its crown. An increase of it means an increase of spiritual life; the beginning, like the completion, is the work of the Holy Ghost in our hearts. And whence comes the wonderful success attending the efforts of the Catholic Church all over the world? Earnest minded Americans and English-

men during the past and present centuries, realizing that Christ's Church was instituted for all the nations of the globe, have made strenuous efforts to convert the heathen. In spite of their enormous resources, the outcome of their labors has been most disappointing under a spiritual aspect. It is not the money, which gives the Catholic Church her success. The sole organisation for the support of the missions of the Church is the "Society for the Propagation of the Faith." How small is not the amount of money it collects compared to the amount collected by various Protestant denominations!

And yet how few are not the successes of the various Protestant churches in heathen countries compared to the acquisitions made by the Catholic Church alone! Whence the difference, if not because the Holy Ghost abides forever with the Church, unites and sanctifies its members, and enables its ministers to spread the truth over the whole world, and because the Catholic Church alone has from Christ Himself the mission of preaching the Gospel, and the power of sending missionaries to carry out her divine mission. Does not St. Paul say: "How shall they preach, unless they be sent?" (Rom. 10:15.) And who has the right to send any one to preach the Gospel, unless the Church commissioned by Jesus Christ?

LESSON THIRTEENTH

ON THE SACRAMENTS IN GENERAL

136. *Q. What is a Sacrament?*
A. A Sacrament is an outward sign instituted by Christ to give grace.

Christ died for all men from Adam to the last child that shall be born before the earth's final destruction; He paid for all superabundantly the price of their salvation. It does not, however, follow that all men shall be saved. Scripture clearly shows that not all men will be saved. On the day of judgment the just will be placed at the right hand of Christ and the wicked at His left. Christ came into the world and died for all men, for both the just and the wicked, but the merits of His Passion were not applied to the latter, for His death did not take away man's free will; and those who sinned grievously and died impenitent, thereby refused the benefit of His mercy, and derived no profit from His merits. St. Paul tells us (Phil. 2:12) that we are to work out our salvation with fear and trembling, for even after Christ has paid the price of our ransom, God will not save us without our coöperation. The price is paid, but it is not applied to us against our will. Christ has left to His Church the means whereby it may be applied to us. The principal of these means we call *Sacraments*. When treating of each Sacrament in particular, we will show that we cannot receive the specific grace of each, unless we receive the Sacrament for which Christ instituted it. The sects, after seceding from the Church, and rising thereby in rebellion against the Christian religion, have grievously erred in regard to these means of salvation. Bellarmine divides their errors into four classes. Some have rejected them all, others have rejected some, others again have deprived them of their efficacy, whilst many more have not understood some of the Sacraments rightly, and did not confer them properly. The reformers of the sixteenth century generally assert that they are mere empty signs, or that they

are only of the same order as the sacraments of the Old Law. We have seen in the foregoing lesson that the Holy Roman Catholic Church is Apostolical, because it maintains all the revealed truth preached by the Apostles. Of all churches she is the only one that has maintained in regard to the Sacraments all truth conveyed by Christ to His Apostles and handed down by them to their successors.

We must begin then by understanding rightly what is meant by a Sacrament. A Sacrament is, the Catechism and Theologians tell us, an outward sign instituted by Christ to give grace. The word sacrament means a sacred thing; and was used by Latin writers in four different meanings. It means 1st, religion, especially the Christian religion; 2nd, a secret thing, or a sacred and secret thing; 3rd, a sign, a symbol of a sacred thing: or 4th, a sign of a sacred thing appertaining to the sanctification of man. In this last meaning it applies to the sacraments of the law of nature, of the law of Moses, and of the New Law. The definition of a sacrament, as given by the Catechism, applies only to the Sacraments of the New Law. A sign is something that leads the sensitive or intellectual faculty to the knowledge of a thing which it signifies or indicates. There are various sorts of signs. We will explain what sort of a sign a sacrament is. It is a sign, because, as St. Thomas says, it does not belong to the species of sign called a cause, for the essence of a sacrament does not consist in causing, but in signifying; as is proved by the sacraments of the Old Law, which did not cause grace, but merely signified it. A Sacrament is a sacred sign both in itself and also with regard to grace, which it signifies. It is a *commemorative* sign viz. of the Passion of Our Lord, the cause of our justification; it is *demonstrative* of sanctifying grace, which is the form of our justification, that is, the interior constituent of our justification; and it is a *prognostic* of future glory, the end of our justification. A Sacrament is not a natural, but an *arbitrary* sign, because it signifies grace only by a divine ordinance; Christ, however, selected these signs and no other on account of a certain resemblance between them and their signification, or a certain analogy between the two. Lastly, a Sacrament is an *efficacious* and *practical* sign; it not only signifies, but also causes. The Catechism calls it also an outward sign, that is, a sign which can be the object of the senses, like ablution, unction, or certain words. These signs

would, indeed, signify nothing and produce no effect, if Christ had not so instituted them; He is the source and dispenser of all graces. The nature of a Sacrament demands besides that this sign be instituted by Christ, not for a time only, but permanently, so that it will remain such as long as the religion itself lasts to which it belongs. Christ instituted this sign to give grace; the sign must therefore have the power both to signify and to give grace, that is, it must signify and produce sanctifying grace or its increase, and also its special grace, which we call sacramental. From the above it is clear that the manna of the Israelites was no sacrament, because although it prefigured something sacred, it was not of a permanent nature. So also is a sacrifice not necessarily a sacrament; because the object of a sacrifice is to honor God, whereas a Sacrament tends of its nature to the sanctification of man. The definition of a Sacrament as explained above does not apply fully either to martyrdom, to the washing of the feet at the Last Supper, or to any other sacramental.

Protestant denominations of all shades reject the Catholic doctrine concerning the Sacraments, because they allege that the word is not to be found with this meaning in Holy Scripture, that Catholics interpret the word as a sign of a sacred thing, wherever it is found. Both assertions are equally false. The Scriptures were not written in Latin, but in Hebrew or Greek; we must, therefore, look for the Greek word, which, as our adversaries concede, means the same thing, viz: mystery. St. Paul in his letter to the Ephesians calls marriage a mystery, a Sacrament, specifically indicating thereby one of the seven Sacraments; no other meaning can be attached to his words than the Catholic definition of a Sacrament. One sacrament is then expressly named in Scripture. The second assertion is equally absurd. Sixteen times in the Latin text of Scripture the word sacrament is used, and in only one instance do we claim that one of the seven Sacraments is meant, viz.: when St. Paul calls marriage "a great Sacrament." Scripture, however, clearly proves that each of the seven Sacraments is an outward sign instituted by Christ to give grace. The whole Christian Tradition unanimously proves the existence of seven Sacraments in the acceptation which the Catechism attaches to the word. It is just as logical to deny the existence of a Triune God, because the Word Trinity is not to be found in

Holy Scripture, as it is to deny those outward signs instituted by Christ to give grace; under the plea that the word sacrament is not found in Scripture.

137. *Q. How many Sacraments are there?*

A. There are seven Sacraments: Baptism, Confirmation, Holy Eucharist, Penance, Extreme Unction, Holy Orders and Matrimony.

The Œcumenical Council of Trent declared it to be a dogma of faith, that there are seven Sacraments of the New Law. Our controversy with the Protestants is not so much about the existence of Sacraments; they readily admit one or more, but about their number, viz: seven, which they reject. They object that seven is never mentioned in Holy Scripture as being the number of the Sacraments, and they fail to see that nowhere are they said to amount to two or three. The Catechism expressly teaches us that there are seven sacraments, neither more nor less. We prove this to be so, 1st, from Scripture, 2nd, from Tradition, 3rd, from the unanimity of the Eastern and Western Church, 4th, by prescription, 5th, by reasons of propriety.

I. I. "Unless a man be born again of water and the Holy Ghost, he cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven" (John 3:5). Protestants, admit with us that this spiritual regeneration is Baptism.

II. The people of Samaria had only been baptized. Peter and John laid their hands upon them and they received the Holy Ghost (Acts 8:17). What else did Peter and John confer than Confirmation?

III. "This is My body . . . This chalice is the New Testament in My blood . . . Do this for the commemoration of Me" (1 Cor. 11:26). These words cannot apply to aught else than the Holy Eucharist.

IV. "Whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven them, and whose sins you shall retain, they are retained" (John 20:23). The Apostles exercised that power by conferring or refusing to confer the Sacrament of Penance.

V. "Is any man sick among you? Let him bring in the priests of the Church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord" (James 5:14). This is exactly what a Catholic priest does, when administering Extreme Unction.

VI. "Neglect not the grace that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy with imposition of the hands of the priesthood" (1 Tim. 5:14). A similar grace is conferred by the Sacraments of Holy Orders on the priests.

VII. "Husbands, love your wives as Christ also loved the Church and delivered Himself up for it . . . This is a great Sacrament, but I speak in Christ and in the Church" (Eph. 5:25). We call this with St. Paul the Sacrament of Matrimony.

2. The Fathers may not mention in their writings the number seven, but they treat, like Scripture, of the different Sacraments, without expressly mentioning their number.

3. The most ancient rituals of the Latin Church, as well as those of the Greeks and Armenians and other Eastern nations, who centuries ago seceded from the unity of Rome, all contain exactly the same number of Sacraments.

4. We have in prescription an irrefutable argument. First, the Church was always in possession of the seven Sacraments, and no epoch, since the Apostles, can be assigned at which any of them began first to be conferred. Therefore the Church has received them from the Apostles and through them from Christ Himself. When Luther with his followers appeared in the XVIth century, the whole Church was in possession of the seven Sacraments; therefore Luther and his followers, by rejecting them, were innovators.

5. It was proper that there should be seven Sacraments adapted to all the necessities of the spiritual life, whether it be considered in the individuals or in the community, which is the Church. For, as the supernatual life bears an analogy to the natural life, so also does it follow a like analogy in its course and evolution. As in the natural life a man is born, strengthened, fed, cured by medicine if he falls sick, and is fully restored to health after the remnants of sickness have been taken away; and as human society must be propagated and be ruled by lawful rulers; so also in the spiritual life must man be born, strengthened, fed, be cured, and again be made convalescent and healthy, and the Church must be propagated and governed. For these different effects the seven Sacraments have been instituted.

138. *Q. Whence have the Sacraments the power of giving grace?*

A. The Sacraments have the power of giving grace from the merits of Jesus Christ.

The matter and the form constituting the essence of each Sacrament are of themselves unable to produce the effects we claim for them; but they do produce them, because Christ instituted them as the instrumental causes of these effects. For instance, the washing of a person's head in baptism could not have of itself the efficacy of cleansing the soul from original sin, but God, being omnipotent, can attach to that action, when accompanied with the prescribed words, the power to produce the effect, which it signifies. When treating of each Sacrament in particular, we will clearly prove that the Sacraments have the power of giving sanctifying grace or its increase, and also a special or Sacramental grace. The Catechism tells us that this power comes from the merits of Christ. In fact, it could not come from any other source, since grace came by Jesus Christ, as St. John (1:17) says. Grace is a fruit of the Redemption; it flowed, as it were, with the divine blood from the wounds of the Saviour. The death of Christ meant the restoration of the human race. The giving of sanctifying grace to man raises him to the supernatural order, for it enables him to become a child of God (John 1:12). Man, by his sin, had made himself unworthy of grace; even by good works he could not acquire any claim to it, because grace is always gratuitously given; it is not due to the actions of man. The merits of Christ are an adequate atonement for all the iniquities of mankind; but these merits are not unconditionally and promiscuously applied to individual men. Christ acquired them and He can put His conditions to their application. If one cannot be a son of God, except he be born again of water and the Holy Ghost, the merits of Christ will not be applied to him, unless that condition be fulfilled. The Sacraments are the channels by which the merits of Christ are imparted to our soul. The sole purpose of their institution is to give grace; grace comes from the merits of Christ; therefore, they have the power of giving grace from the merits of Christ. Christ could, indeed, have applied the merits of His passion directly to each soul without the use of the Sacraments, but Scripture clearly testifies that He has not chosen to do so. He instituted the Sacraments as the necessary means, whereby His merits are to be applied to us.

139. *Q. What grace do the Sacraments give?*
A. Some of the Sacraments *give* sanctifying grace, and others *increase* it in our souls.

There is a wide difference between Catholics and Protestants in regard to the efficacy of the Sacraments. The Protestant view is that the Sacraments are institutions designed merely to help our faith, whereas the Catholics claim that not only do the Sacraments signify grace, but also cause or give it. The Sacraments are instrumental causes or means of grace, God being the principal cause. They are like a saw in the hand of a carpenter; the effect, sawing, is attributed partly to the instrument, partly to the hand that wields it. The carpenter without the instrument could not produce the effect; neither could the saw by itself. The subject on which the effect is to be produced may be differently disposed; the saw will cut one kind of wood easier than another. So also the subjects on which the grace of the Sacraments is to be conferred may be differently disposed, and may be more or less susceptible of it. The chief instrument of grace is, however, not the disposition of the recipient, but the sacred rite, the Sacrament itself. We claim that the outward sacramental action, altogether distinct from the acts of faith, hope and other similar acts constituting the disposition of the recipient, has from Christ's institution the power to give grace by itself, presupposing the necessary disposition in the adults, so that the Sacraments give grace, without any good internal act of the one, who confers or receives the Sacrament. We will prove this from the usual sources, taking Baptism as an illustration. The arguments will apply to each Sacrament, as we shall see, in the sequel.

I. "God has saved us *by* the laver of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost" (Tit. 3:5). The instrumental cause of our new birth, of grace, is clearly given; it is no other than the washing of Baptism.

"Except a man be born again *of* water and of the Holy Ghost, he cannot enter the kingdom of heaven" (John 3:5). Here again water is given as the instrumental cause of our second birth.

II. St. Augustine adducing the above text against the Donatists, says: "Not by the faith of the parents or of those who present the candidate, or confer the Sacrament,

but of water and of the Holy Ghost; therefore the water regenerates man."

Tertullian says: "The body is washed, that the soul may be cleansed; the body is anointed that the soul may be consecrated; the body is signed, that the soul may be strengthened; the body is shadowed by the imposition of the hands, that the soul may be enlightened by the Holy Ghost; the body is nourished with the body and blood of Christ; that the soul may be quickened by God."

III. Reason corroborates the above arguments. The infants are justified by Baptism, for Christ came to save all men, children, of course, included; Baptism is a necessary condition for them as well as for adults. The cause of this justification for the children is not the faith of the subject, because it is not capable of it; it is not the faith or the holiness of the minister, which are immaterial to the efficacy of the Sacraments; therefore the action itself, the baptismal washing is the instrumental cause of the child's justification.

The Sacraments when worthily received, that is, when there is no obstacle in the way, always give grace, for this is the object of their divine institution. They either give sanctifying grace, when the recipient is deprived of it, or else they increase it in his soul. This applies even to those Sacraments instituted to give sanctifying grace, to those who have it already. One may be in the state of sanctifying grace, that is, have no mortal sin on his conscience, and yet receive worthily the Sacrament of Penance; a venial sin being sufficient matter for absolution. An act of perfect charity may precede Baptism, the soul even before Baptism would enjoy God's friendship and be acceptable in His sight. In these cases both Sacraments give an increase of sanctifying grace.

Hence it follows that frequent and worthy reception of the Sacraments contributes more powerfully than any other spiritual help towards making our souls pleasing to God.

140. *Q. Which are the Sacraments that give sanctifying grace?*

A. The Sacraments that give sanctifying grace are Baptism and Penance; and they are called Sacraments of the dead.

The purpose of the Sacraments is the sanctification of

man; they all give grace, but they do not all give grace in the same way. As we have seen in the foregoing question, some impart sanctifying grace to those who do not possess it, while others increase it in our souls. Baptism and Penance are the two Sacraments instituted by Christ to raise us from the death of sin to the life of grace. They have, by divine institution, the power to forgive mortal sin, although they may be also received by penitents that have only venial sins on their conscience; and in that case they increase sanctifying grace in the soul. The object of Christ in instituting the other five Sacraments was not to forgive mortal sin, although there may be extraordinary cases, when these Sacraments also take away mortal sin. Original sin is the spiritual deathblow to the soul; we are all born children of wrath, we were born enemies of God and without any right to the kingdom of heaven. Baptism was instituted to effect our spiritual regeneration, to cleanse us from all sins, and open to us again the gates of heaven. If after Baptism we have the misfortune to die spiritually again, Penance is the means whereby we may recover our spiritual life. These are the most necessary Sacraments; Baptism for all, Penance for all those who have afterwards fallen into mortal sin. Baptism is necessary for children and adults alike; Penance is necessary only to those who have attained the use of reason and committed mortal sin. Penance remits actual sin; children before attaining the use of reason cannot be guilty of actual sin, and would have nothing to submit to the power of the keys.

141. *Q. Why are Baptism and Penance called Sacraments of the dead?*

A. Baptism and Penance are called Sacraments of the dead, because they take away mortal sin which is the death of the soul, and give grace, which is its life.

As the soul animates the body, so does sanctifying grace animate the soul; as the body dies, when the soul leaves it, so does the soul die when the grace of God leaves it. After the soul leaves the body, the body is incapable of performing acts, which suppose life. It is only when animated by the soul, that the body is able to attain the purpose of its existence. Mortal sin is the spiritual death of the soul.

The soul without grace, its spiritual life, is unable to perform any action tending to attain the end for which it was

created. The soul was created for heaven, but, when dead through sin, it cannot move heavenwards. As the body without the soul naturally decomposes, so also does the soul, when grace has deserted it, fall naturally from bad to worse. Sin not only causes the spiritual death of the soul, inasmuch as it renders it incapable of performing any meritorious action, but causes also its eternal death in the fire of hell. Sin makes the soul hateful to God; and causes God to look upon it in the same way He does the souls in hell. Once dead, the soul is of herself unable to rise again, for this requires a miracle; God alone can effect it. The theologians call the justification of the sinner the greatest of God's works. The creation of the world, the Incarnation of the Word and the justification of the sinner are commonly called God's greatest works. When comparing them, it will be plain that the last is the greatest of all. If we compare it with the creation of the world, we must admit that it is greater, because it is of the supernatural order. Comparing it with the Incarnation, it is true that the latter, in itself is the greater, because the Incarnation is the source of all justification; but if we consider the means by which both are accomplished by God, the justification of the sinner is greater, because the Incarnation is a means by which God wished to accomplish the justification of the sinner. Theologians argue among themselves how sanctifying grace expels sin from the soul, whether it does it by its own intrinsic power and dignity, without any extrinsic favor and pardon of God, or whether through the latter accompanying it. It seems more conformable to the teaching of the Council of Trent to say, that sanctifying grace essentially contains that special power, and therefore that it is sanctifying grace taken in its full meaning, that expels sin. It is therefore safe to say that it is intrinsically and absolutely impossible for sanctifying grace and mortal sin to be found in the same subject. They are two contrary forms, such as light and darkness, health and sickness, life and death. It seems impossible that God could adopt some one as His son, and, at the same time, hate him as He hates the demons in hell. Baptism and Penance are the instrumental causes by which the greatest of miracles is performed; they cause the spiritually dead to rise to life again, they restore the friendship of God to the soul. They are called Sacraments of the dead, because they may be received by those who are dead

to grace that they may become again children of God and heirs to His Kingdom.

142. *Q. Which are the Sacraments that increase sanctifying grace in our soul?*

A. The Sacraments that increase sanctifying grace in our soul are: Confirmation, Holy Eucharist, Extreme Unction, Holy Orders and Matrimony, and they are called Sacraments of the living.

All those who possess sanctifying grace do not possess it in the same degree. To understand rightly what the Catechism teaches in regard to the effects of these five Sacraments, viz: an increase of sanctifying grace in our souls, it will be well to prove that sanctifying grace can be increased, and that, consequently, it is not equal in all. The Council of Trent has declared this to be a dogma of faith.

Jovinian in the fourth century taught that all virtues, as also all vices, are equal. The Reformers of the sixteenth century acknowledge a certain inequality, but, at the same time, deny that sanctifying grace is increased by acts of virtue, or that sins are detrimental to salvation. Good works, according to them, are at most a manifestation of present goodness; and evil deeds are not imputed to the just. Catholic Theology teaches the contrary.

I. Scripture, when taken in its obvious meaning, shows us the just progressing not only in virtues, but in sanctifying grace: "The path of the just is as a shining light; it goeth forwards and increaseth even to perfect day" (Prov. 4:18). "He that is just, let him be justified still, and he that is holy let him be sanctified still" (Apoc, 22:11). Scripture teaches us, besides, that charity admits degrees, therefore sanctifying grace must also be capable of increase, since, according to many, it is charity itself, or is at least always proportionate to charity. St. Augustine writes: "We are justified, but justice, that is, sanctifying grace, increases with the progress we make in good works."

Sanctifying grace increases before God, if the possessor merits by his good works an increase of glory and grace. The Council of Trent has proclaimed it a dogma of faith, that the just really merit by their good works an increase of glory and grace, a doctrine which is altogether conformable to Scriptural evidence; therefore it is also plain that sanctifying grace may be increased.

Sanctifying grace is chiefly increased by the worthy reception of the five Sacraments instituted for that purpose.

If they did not give grace, they would not be Sacraments, for they would be deprived of Our Lord's object in instituting the Sacraments. These Sacraments were not instituted to give sanctifying grace to those who have it not, because Baptism and Penance are the only two instituted for that purpose; therefore they must give an increase of sanctifying grace. Those Sacraments, therefore are not to be received by those having a mortal sin on their conscience. If any one intending to receive any of them is in that wretched state, it behooves him first to be justified by either Baptism or Penance. To receive them otherwise would be bringing God's curse on the recipient instead of grace. When treating of each of these five Sacraments in particular, we will show what dispositions are required on the part of the recipient.

Most probably these Sacraments also may confer the first grace accidentally, viz: when the recipient, without any fault of his own, is ignorant of his present sinful state, and has at least as much contrition for sin as is required for justification in the Sacrament of Penance. Theologians do not agree whether in that case justification is obtained immediately from the power of the Sacraments, or rather mediately through his own act amounting virtually to an act of perfect contrition.

143. *Q. Why are Confirmation, Holy Eucharist, Extreme Unction, Holy Orders and Matrimony called Sacraments of the living?*

A. Confirmation, Holy Eucharist, Extreme Unction, Holy Orders and Matrimony are called Sacraments of the living, because those who receive them worthily are already living the life of grace.

When we treat of each of these Sacraments in particular, it will be clearly shown that they should be received only by those living already the life of grace.

144. *Q. What sin does he commit who receives the Sacraments of the living in mortal sin?*

A. He who receives the Sacraments of the living in mortal sin, commits a sacrilege, which is a great sin, because it is an abuse of a sacred thing.

Sacrilege is a profanation, an abuse of a sacred thing, that is, of persons, places or things that are sacred. Receiving the Sacraments of the living in the state of mortal sin is a profanation of a sacred thing. It is in itself a mortal sin. Receiving these Sacraments in that state not only brings no graces, but it brings damnation to the soul. The sacred things in the Old Law were but figures of the sacred things in the New. To form an idea as to how God regards a sacrilege, we have but to read how He punished those guilty of it in the Old Law. The history of the impious Balthasar is familiar to every one. When the time foretold by Isaiah and Jeremiah, the Prophets, for the ruin of Babylon and the delivery of the Jews had come, Cyrus, their liberator, advanced with a great army of united Persians and Medes. Balthasar, a grand-son of Nabuchodonosor, then occupied the throne of Babylon. The enemy had advanced almost up to the gates of the city, but thinking it impregnable, Balthasar continued to amuse himself. He gave a great feast to his court. All drank to excess and the king ordered the gold and silver vessels to be brought which Nabuchodonosor had stolen from the Temple of Jerusalem, and he profaned them by drinking out of them, he and his wives. He beheld an unknown hand tracing three mysterious words on the wall. Mane-Thekel-Phares. Daniel was summoned to explain the words. After reproaching the king for his profanation of the sacred vessels, He tells him of the punishment to follow. That very night the troops of Cyrus enter the city and put Balthasar to death in his own palace. (Dan. 5). A single reflection will enable us to understand the enormity of a sacrilege. What were the vessels of the temple of Jerusalem compared to the Sacraments, the instruments of our salvation?

In the second book of the Machabees (4:37) there is narrated how the slayer of Onias, the High-Priest, was put to death by an infuriated mob; the Lord, as Holy Scripture explicitly adds, punishing him as he deserved. Menelaus, the instigator of the murder of Onias, paid a little later the penalty of his sacrilege, (2 Mach. 13:6) and justly too, because he had committed many crimes against the altar of God. These instances are sufficient to show that, if a sacrilege in the Old Law was a crime, it is a much greater one in the New Dispensation. What comparison is there between the murder of a High-Priest and the delivering up of

Jesus Christ to the devil in a heart stained by mortal sin?

The Catholics, before receiving any of the Sacraments of the living, go first to confession, to obtain through that Sacrament pardon of their sins, and to remove all obstacles to the salutary effects of these sacraments.

145. *Q. Besides sanctifying grace do the Sacraments give any other grace?*

A. Besides sanctifying grace the Sacraments give another grace called sacramental.

This answer expresses the unanimous and sure teaching of all theologians. Besides conferring on the worthy recipient sanctifying grace, or its increase, as the case may be, the Sacraments also confer a special grace, of which each of them is the particular channel; and this grace is called sacramental. Each Sacrament has been instituted for a particular purpose; Baptism, to regenerate our souls; Confirmation, to strengthen us in the faith; Holy Eucharist, to nourish our souls, etc. Now to attain the different ends for which the Sacraments are instituted, the particular sacramental grace of each is necessary, because the effects of the Sacrament is the means by which we must attain the ends of the Sacraments. Unless, therefore, the effects be different, it would be hard to know wherein the Sacraments differ, if not solely in the external rite. Supposing Holy Orders and Confirmation gave only sanctifying grace or its increase, the sole difference would consist in the manner of administering them, but in their effects on the soul they would be alike. If the Sacraments do not give sacramental grace, one would not be more necessary than another; the Holy Eucharist would not be more necessary than Matrimony; and yet Christ tells us that, except we eat the flesh of the Son of man and drink His blood, we shall not have life in us. These words indicate that the Holy Eucharist is more necessary than Matrimony; He even suggests other states as more perfect than Matrimony. All this would be absurd, if each did not confer a different grace. Furthermore, if the Sacraments did not confer each a different sacramental grace, Christ would have acted very illogically by instituting seven, when one would have been sufficient. A great many non-Catholic sects, rejecting what we call sacramental grace, logically rejected all the Sacraments except one; and their teaching in regard to that only one left, is anything but

Catholic doctrine. For them Baptism is not the real instrumental cause of regeneration which we hold it to be. The primitive Church believed in seven Sacraments; there is the same infallible authority for the one as there is for the other. This again shows that Protestants after leaving the unity of Rome, have given up almost every vital point of the Christian inheritance. The Catholic Church of to-day holds exactly the identical doctrine that was handed down to her by the forefathers in the faith.

146. *Q. What is sacramental grace?*

A. Sacramental grace is a special help which God gives, to attain the end for which He instituted each Sacrament.

The preceding question teaches us the existence of sacramental grace; we must now consider wherein it consists, or what difference there is between sacramental and sanctifying grace. According to the opinion generally held by theologians, sacramental grace, with the exception of the character impressed, is not a new habit or state added to sanctifying grace and the virtues connected with it. It is not a different sort of sanctifying grace, but it seems to be sanctifying grace with two special favors attached to it. The first is a special ordinance of God directing it towards the end of each Sacrament, the second is a special help or actual grace to that end, or at least the right to obtain that help at the proper time. We will in a few words indicate the sacramental grace of each Sacrament.

The sacramental grace of Baptism is sanctifying grace directed to the very beginning of the spiritual life of a man coming into this world. It tends to spiritual regeneration, whereby man dies to sin and is born again as an adopted son of God and a member of Christ. By it not only all sin, but all penalty due to sin is taken away. Besides, Baptism gives a special help to protect the newness of life and to receive worthily the other Sacraments. The sacramental grace of Confirmation is sanctifying grace, directed to strengthen the spiritual life, and, at the same time, actual grace enabling the recipient to constantly retain and profess the faith, and to repel all contrary temptations.

The sacramental grace of Holy Eucharist is sanctifying grace directed to nourish the spiritual life, and to unite the soul by charity with God; and, at the same time, a special

help to persevere in the spiritual life and to progress in the practice of charity and the other virtues.

The sacramental grace of Penance is sanctifying grace tending to spiritual resurrection and to recovery from mortal sickness; and, at the same time, a special help to enable one to be more sincerely sorry for his sins, to expiate the past and avoid future sins.

The sacramental grace of Extreme Unction is sanctifying grace directed to a more perfect cure of the soul, that the remnants of sin may be washed away and the soul strengthened in its last struggle, and, at the same time, a special help to bear patiently the trials of sickness and overcome the powers of darkness

The sacramental grace of Holy Orders is sanctifying grace directed to priestly holiness, and at the same time a special help to discharge the duties of the priestly office properly and efficaciously.

The sacramental grace of Matrimony is sanctifying grace directed to conjugal sanctity, and, at the same time, a special help to secure for the recipients mutual love, conjugal fidelity and chastity, and to enable them to give their children a truly Christian education.

Some theologians think, not without reason, that in each Sacrament, those virtues especially and gifts of the Holy Ghost are increased which are most in keeping with the end of the Sacrament. Such are: religion in Baptism, faith in Confirmation, charity in Holy Eucharist, compunction of the soul in Penance, hope in Extreme Unction, devotion and zeal in Holy Order, fidelity and long suffering in Matrimony.

The history of the Church records examples of saints who have received those special helps, without, however, receiving the Sacrament. There have been martyrs, who died courageously for the faith, without having received the Sacrament of Confirmation. There have been holy confessors, who constantly avoided sin, without the aid of the Sacrament of Penance; but these are rather exceptions. God can dispense His graces in an extraordinary way, although the Sacraments remain their ordinary channels.

147. *Q. Do the Sacraments always give grace?*

A. The Sacraments always give grace, if we receive them with the right disposition.

The Sacraments always give grace, provided there be no obstacle in the way, or, in other words provided the recipient has the right dispositions. We must then examine what the right dispositions are for different classes of persons. It is self-evident that the same dispositions are not demanded of all. Baptism validly conferred invariably washes away all sin from an infant or a child before it attains the use of reason; for such no dispositions are required. For adults there are, quite naturally, certain restrictions. Holiness in the recipient is not necessary for the validity of the Sacrament, because Christ willed that the Sacraments should be means to holiness; the end cannot be required before the means are employed. Among the right dispositions necessary for adults the first is the intention. An adult must have the intention, that is, the will to receive the Sacrament, according to the general belief of theologians. It would really seem absurd that an adult could be justified against his will, or as St. Augustine beautifully expresses it: "He who made you without you, does not justify you without you." On the part of the adult intention and coöperation are required. Theologians demand of the one who confers a Sacrament the intention to give that which is given by the Church; and in the recipient a positive will to receive the Sacrament; the mere absence of a contrary volition would not be sufficient. Considering the validity of a Sacrament, we must except from this general rule the Holy Eucharist, because as it exists before it is conferred, it remains a true Sacrament, even when given to one unwilling to receive it. Penance, besides the intention, also requires for its validity, contrition and confession. It is, in general sufficient that the recipient of a Sacrament should have the will, or intention to receive it, so that his receiving it may be called a voluntary act. For the Sacrament of Extreme Unction most probably not even that much is required. Besides the intention to receive the grace of a Sacrament, the right dispositions also include the state of grace for the Sacraments of the living. To receive the grace conferred by the Sacraments of the dead, the state of grace is not necessary, but only such dispositions as remove the obstacles to the fruitful working of these Sacraments, such as faith, hope, detestation of sin, etc. The more perfect the dispositions, the more abundant also will the share of grace be, which the recipient derives from the Sacraments.

Theologians argue the question as to whether a Sacrament received with an obstacle preventing it from conferring grace, would revive after the obstacle has been removed. Supposing, for instance, that an adult is baptized without any sorrow for his sins, the Sacrament of Baptism might be validly conferred and yet not give grace; can the baptismal grace be revived, that is, be conferred after the obstacle is removed? If not, then it would seem that he could no longer be saved, because he could not be baptized over again and the baptismal grace could not be conferred by any other Sacrament. Therefore we admit the teaching of almost all theologians, that the Sacrament is revived when the obstacle is removed. This seems to apply also to the Sacraments which imprint a character, Confirmation and Holy Orders, because, like Baptism, they cannot be reiterated; they continue virtually in the character imprinted in the soul. This also seems very likely for the Sacraments of Extreme Unction and Matrimony, because, as a rule, they cannot be reiterated either. For the Sacraments of Penance and Holy Eucharist it is extremely doubtful; we leave this to the intricate argumentation of theologians. We must not forget, however, that, whether the Sacraments can be revived or not, putting wilfully an obstacle preventing them from conferring the grace for which they were instituted, is a great sacrilege; and that it is better not to receive them, than to receive them unworthily.

148. *Q. Can we receive the Sacraments more than once?*

A. We can receive the Sacraments more than once, except Baptism, Confirmation and Holy Orders.

Two of the Sacraments we are advised to receive often, viz: Penance and Holy Communion. Extreme Unction and Matrimony may, under certain conditions, be received more than once, whilst Baptism, Confirmation and Holy Orders, if validly conferred, may never be reiterated. In the following question the Catechism gives us the reason why these three cannot be received more than once. Penance may be received even more than once a day. The Holy Eucharist may be received only once a day, except in a few extraordinary circumstances, such as in the case of one, who would receive in the morning out of devotion, and, being later in the day in danger of death, receive again the Holy Eucharist

as Viaticum to the other world. The priest celebrating three Masses on Christmas day receives three times, Holy Communion being a necessary part of the Mass. Extreme Unction may be again administered to the same person, when again in danger of death from the same, or any other sickness. A consummated marriage among Catholics cannot be dissolved, except by the death of one of the contracting parties; the remaining party is then at liberty to receive the Sacrament of Matrimony again.

149. *Q. Why can we not receive Baptism, Confirmation and Holy Orders more than once?*

A. We cannot receive Baptism, Confirmation and Holy Orders more than once, because they imprint a character in the soul.

There is very little left in the teachings of non-Catholic bodies of the primitive doctrine of the Church of Christ concerning the Sacraments. It is, therefore, not surprising to find that the doctrine set forth by the Catechism on these questions has no place in Protestant works on theology; or where it has, it does not have the meaning, which Catholics attach to the word. John Wicleff taught his followers that a sacramental character had neither Scripture nor reason in its favor. The Reformers of the sixteenth century joined in chorus with him, and simply pronounced it a papal invention. Pope Innocent III was, according to them, the first to think of it. Had they only given themselves the trouble to examine the writings of that great Pope, they would have had ample evidence to convince themselves that others had thought of it before him.

The Catholic Church teaches that Baptism, Confirmation and Holy Orders can never be reiterated, because they imprint a character in the soul. In the following question we will examine wherein that character consists, and we will now prove from the same sources whence Protestants claim to deny, that there is such a thing as a character in the soul. There are texts in Holy Scripture from which the existence of that character may clearly be gathered, especially with the explanations of the Fathers and of the Church, without which no ecclesiastical question can absolutely be established.

St. Paul says (2 Cor. 1:21): "He that hath anointed us is God, who also hath sealed us and given the pledge of the

Spirit in our hearts." Here we have the three effects of regeneration: (1) the anointing which undoubtedly is done by the imparting of sanctifying grace, (2) the sign or seal by which we are consecrated to God, by which is meant the character, which the Fathers generally call sign or seal; (3) the pledge of the Spirit, that is the testimony of a good conscience following justification.

St. Paul says again: "In whom believing you were signed with the Holy Spirit of promise, who is the pledge of our inheritance" (Eph. 1:13). St. Paul here evidently speaks of Baptism, which is administered after we believe, and he tells us that we are signed with the Holy Spirit. The Greek and Latin Fathers of the Church interpret this as the character imprinted in Baptism. It cannot be said that there is question here of sealing promises to excite faith, as it comes after faith.

"Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby you are sealed unto the day of redemption" (Eph. 4:30). The Reformers applied all these texts to the sealing of promises made in our hearts to confirm and strengthen our faith. But is it not doing unusual violence to the texts? It would, indeed, seem very strange that St. Paul should say that we are sealed, if he meant that the promises made to us were sealed.

Circumcision was meant to leave a mark on the body, whereby the Jew might be known from the Gentile, just as the character leaves an indelible mark on the soul.

The writings of the early Fathers give most positive evidence of the Christian belief in the first ages in regard to the sacramental character. St. Cyril of Jerusalem in his Catechism describes Baptism by its effects, viz: regeneration, remission of sins, the holy and ineffaceable seal. "The Holy Ghost," he says, "seals your soul at the time of Baptism."

Reason not only is not opposed to the Catholic doctrine in this, but rather favors it, and even suggests arguments in favor of a sacramental character. When man gives an office to a man, he cannot confer on him any interior quality qualifying for that office; when he loves, he does not make the object of his love good and beautiful; his love does not add anything to its object. With God it is not so. When God loves a man, He makes him good and beautiful by His grace; when He wishes us to believe in Him, to hope in Him,

and to love Him, He infuses into our soul the virtues of faith, hope and charity. Would it not seem then quite natural also that, when God deputes one to a certain office, that He does not do so by mere appointment, but also gives to the man He has chosen the qualities fitting him for that office? These qualities we call character.

In the next place Baptism is admitted by all, except the Anabaptists, to give something sacramental, even when it is conferred and received without faith. Some other Sacraments, like the Holy Eucharist and Penance, do not confer anything when received without faith. Whence the difference? Those who are baptized by infidels are, if the proper matter and form have been used, validly baptized; even Luther and Calvin admitted that Penance received without faith does not remit sin. There must be something in Baptism which is not in Penance; we call it the character, owing to which Baptism can be received only once. The same applies to Confirmation and Holy Orders. These Sacraments are lasting in their effects; the others may be repeated, because their effects are not necessarily lasting, or if they are, grace may be increased by their frequent reception.

150. *Q. What is the character which these Sacraments imprint in the soul?*

A. The character which these Sacraments imprint in the soul is a spiritual mark which remains forever.

The existence of the sacramental character being clearly established, we now proceed to explain wherein it consists. The nature of this character has not been sufficiently defined by the Church, so as to exclude all discussion; Catholic theologians do not all agree in explaining its essence. Without entering into a theoretical discussion, we will give only the more general opinion, which we consider to be the most plausible. We must admit for certain that the character is not a mere relation of one thing to another, such as, the relation of teachers in regard to their pupils. According to St. Thomas, the character is something real, absolute, physically inherent in the soul. It is a permanent quality adorning its subject, very much like beauty in the human body. The immediate subject of the character is not a faculty of the soul, but is the soul itself. The sacramental character is also a sign indicating the recipient as destined to a certain purpose, just as our currency has a certain im-

pression showing it to be a means of exchange, or as the uniform of a soldier manifests his particular occupation. The character also indicates a spiritually active or passive faculty, viz: a supernatural help of God to receive or to confer the other Sacraments. This faculty, according to St. Thomas, appertaining to the service of God according to the religion of Christ, is in a measure a partaking of the power, the dignity and the priesthood of Christ. That is the reason why the faithful are called a chosen race, a royal priesthood, the priests of the God-Christ. The following question will show that the character in the soul is ineffaceable.

The effects of the sacramental character may be viewed in general as applying to all the Sacraments which imprint it, or to each in particular.

Considered in general, first, it adds spiritual beauty and adornment to the soul. Secondly, it makes man resemble Christ as a member resembles the head, a soldier the commanding general, a minister the High Priest; thirdly, in the sight of God it establishes a great difference between those so endowed and those that are not; fourthly, it gives us claims to special rights and power.

Viewed in particular in each of the Sacraments that imprint a character, the character imprinted in Baptism is the distinctive mark of the family of Christ. The person endowed with it, belongs to His family, is distinguished in the sight of God from those who are not baptized, and possesses a right to further favors, belonging to those who are of the same household.

The character imprinted in Confirmation is the distinctive mark of the soldiers of Christ. By it the recipient is enrolled in the regular army of Christ, and is distinguished from those who are not confirmed. It enables him actually to profess the religion of Christ, and renders him better fitted to receive the other Sacraments.

The character imprinted in Holy Orders is the glorious mark of the priesthood of Christ. The faithful marked with it are set aside from among those who are not ordained. By it they are made the leaders of the army of Christ and resemble Christ, the High-Priest more closely, become partakers of the dignity and powers of Christ's priesthood. This character does not make man resemble Christ in His Person, but in His power, for by it Christ communicates to man His own priesthood.

The Catechism teaches us, that this character remains in the soul forever. The Church has never defined, that it remains also in the other world; yet it is the general opinion of theologians that it does. The chief reason confirming this view is that, as it is a consecration, it must last as long as its subject the soul will exist. We have an illustration of this in the inanimate objects dedicated to the service of God. Churches and altars remain consecrated as long as they are not destroyed. Therefore the character remains after this life, and in the good is a source of glory, and in the wicked a source of shame; very nearly as the military character remains in the soldiers after the battle is won; in the winner it means glory, and in the vanquished, disgrace. Such is the reasoning of St. Thomas.

151. *Q. Does this character remain in the soul even after death?*

A. This character remains in the soul even after death, for the honor and glory of those who are saved; for the shame and punishment of those who are lost.

Although the above is not an article of faith clearly defined by the Church, yet it is the unanimous opinion of the Fathers of the Church and of theologians. St. Augustine, speaking of certain priests who had gone over to the heresy of the Donatists and returned repentant to the bosom of the true Church, says: "Although the same functions have been entrusted to them as before, yet they were not ordained again, because Holy Orders had been preserved in them in their integrity in the same way as Baptism." The character is indelible, hence it follows that were a dead priest to return to life again, he would not need to be baptized, confirmed or ordained again. No so with a married man; death breaks the marriage tie, and if he were to return to life again, a subsequent marriage during the lifetime of his previous wife would not be a sinful act; marriage imprints no character in the soul. It is evident that, if this character remains after death, it must be for the honor and glory of those who are saved, and for the shame and the punishment of those who are lost. It will be a visible mark for all eternity. A celestial vision was vouchsafed to a servant of God showing the equal merits of St. Augustine and St. Thomas of Aquinas. St. Augustine had the episcopal character, but in his youth had lost virginal

chastity. St. Thomas had never lost that precious prerogative, but he was only a priest. The fulness of the sacerdotal character seemed to make up for the loss of the many privileges attached to virginal chastity. To be an adopted child of the Most High, a soldier of Christ and a sharer of His priesthood, will be most honorable distinctions for the recipients and possessors of these characters, but will not be vouchsafed to the other elect. In hell these characters will serve as an eternal disgrace and punishment for those who proved unworthy of these distinctions.

LESSON FOURTEENTH

ON BAPTISM

152. *Q. What is Baptism?*

A. Baptism is a Sacrament which cleanses us from original sin, makes us Christians, children of God and heirs of Heaven.

I. Baptism literally means immersion. In Holy Scripture the word Baptism is used to convey four different meanings. 1st. It is used sometimes in the literal sense, as when it is said of Judith that she went out in the nights, and washed herself in a fountain of water (Judith 12:7). The Latin here has "*baptizabat se*" — baptized herself; 2nd. It is used metaphorically for a great suffering or affliction, which, as it were, drowns man like a river, as when Christ said of Himself: "I have a baptism wherewith I have to be baptized, and how I am straitened until it be accomplished!" (Luke 12:50). II. For the fulness of grace and spiritual joy through the infusion of the gifts of the Holy Ghost: "You shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost" (Acts 1:15). III. For the figure of Christian baptism: "And all in Moses were baptized in the cloud and in the sea" (1 Cor. 10:2), that is, baptized to a certain extent. The passage through the Red Sea is a figure of Baptism, in which the Egyptians, that is our sins, are drowned in the blood of Christ. 3rd. It is used for the legal and traditional washings of the Jews, and also for the solemn ceremony performed for St. John the Baptist, which is called the baptism of penance. 4th. Lastly it is used to designate the first of seven Sacraments of the New Law.

Holy Scripture and the Holy Fathers give other names also to the Sacrament of Baptism. St. Paul calls it "The laver of water" (Eph. 5:26); "the laver of regeneration and renovation" (Tit. 3:5); "illumination" (Hebr. 6:4); this last appellation is also frequently met with in the writ-

ings of the Greek Fathers. The Fathers of the Council of Trent call it also the Sacrament of faith.

In the Old Law there were various figures of Baptism, such as, the ark of Noah, the passage through the Red Sea, but above all, the circumcision and the baptism of St. John.

The preceding lesson has taught us the essentials of a Sacrament, viz.: their divine institution, visible signs and graces. There can be no doubt but that Christ has instituted the Sacrament of Baptism, although even Scripture does not expressly say so. The Apostles speak of it as existing; the Saviour commands all to be baptized in order to enter heaven; a divine institution alone could give to that sacred ceremony such wonderful efficacy. But it is not so easy to specify exactly the time, when Christ did institute Baptism. All theologians agree that Baptism was not obligatory till after the resurrection of Christ; but the great majority place the institution of Baptism at a previous date. St. Augustine and St. Thomas, and most of the Fathers are of the opinion that Christ instituted Baptism before His death, and that it was administered before His death by the Apostles. This opinion has two great arguments in its favor. 1st. St. John says (4:1): "The Pharisees had heard that Jesus maketh more disciples, and baptizeth more than John." The Baptism here spoken of is not the baptism of St. John, but a different one, for this is clear from the declaration of St. John himself (Matt. 3:11); therefore Baptism existed and was administered before the death of Christ. 2nd. It is altogether improbable, we might say absurd, that the Apostles should have received Holy Communion and have been ordained at the Last Supper without having been baptized. St. Augustine therefore thinks, although it be not expressed in Scripture, that the Saviour Himself baptized the Apostles. Others claim that He first baptized His Holy Mother, then St. Peter; Peter then baptized Andrew and the Sons of Zededee, and these the other Apostles. How absurd to imagine that the Bible as privately interpreted is the only rule of faith, when without the infallible authority of a living teacher, it would be difficult to prove from Scripture some of the fundamental doctrines of Christianity.

Most probably Christ instituted Baptism as a Sacrament at the time He was baptized by St. John. Then the waters coming in contact with the person of Christ received the

power to sanctify and cleanse from sin; the accompanying manifestation of the three divine Persons designated the form of Baptism. Many things which Jesus did, are not written in Holy Scripture.

The two other essentials, besides divine institution, are a visible sign and grace. The visible sign in Baptism is the matter and the form of the Sacrament, the laver of water in the word of life; the washing and words appointed by Christ. This sign both signifies and gives grace; first, sanctifying grace by blotting out original and actual sin, and then sacramental grace, that is, the special help to enable the newly-baptized to preserve in all its beauty the spiritual mark of the sacramental character imprinted by Baptism. Baptism makes us Christians, therefore without Baptism no one can be a Christian. Many a dissident sect claims for itself the name and the honor of Christian and repudiates the only means by which one becomes a Christian. Without Baptism we do not belong to the mystic body of Christ. Baptism makes us children of God, without it we are children of wrath. Baptism raises us to the supernatural order and makes it possible for us to be heirs of heaven; it gives us a right to the kingdom of God; God owes it to Himself to give us heaven, provided we do not bargain away our rights by committing mortal sin.

153. *Q. Are actual sins ever remitted by Baptism?*
A. Actual sins and all the punishment due to them are remitted by Baptism, if the person baptized be guilty of any.

Baptism was intended by the Saviour chiefly to blot out original sin, but it may also remit actual sin previously committed and all the punishment due to it. The teaching of St. Paul is so clear on this point as to remove all doubt. "Know you not," he says, "that all we, who are baptized in Christ Jesus, are baptized in His death? For we are buried together with Him by Baptism into death; that as Christ is risen from the dead by the glory of the Father, so also we may walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of His death, we shall be also in the likeness of His resurrection. Knowing this that our old man is crucified with Him, that the body of sin may be destroyed to the end that we may serve sin no longer" (Rom. 6:3 et seqq.). St. Paul by these words

clearly teaches that by Baptism we die to sin, and that sin is destroyed in us. However Christ Himself had clearly enough expressed Himself on this point, when He said: "He that believeth and is baptized, shall be saved" (Mark 16:16). Is it not clear from these words that all sins previously committed must be forgiven by Baptism, for how could otherwise the sinner be saved? The words of Christ suppose that all sins are forgiven by Baptism. Actual sin as well as original sin must then be taken away by Baptism, as otherwise it would be ineffective; man could not, at the same time, be a child of God and a child of wrath. A man converted to the true faith after a long sinful life is cleansed by Baptism not only from original sin, but also from actual sins and the punishment due to them, if he has the necessary dispositions. In a child, before it attains the use of reason, no dispositions are needed. In an adult, or one having the use of reason, certain dispositions are requisite. Baptism conferred on one asleep or drunk would be no baptism, because no one can validly be baptized against his will. Besides the intention for the fruitful reception of Baptism there is also required, according to the Council of Trent, that the candidate, excited and helped by God's grace, should believe, hope and have an incipient love of God, and be also sorry for his actual sins. This act of sorrow needs not be perfect contrition, which covers a multitude of sins, because this would be putting the effect before the cause. If an adult were so pure as to be stained with original sin only, even attrition would not be necessary, but only a certain displeasure of it, inasmuch as original sin is an offense of God. Without these dispositions, although the sacramental character would be imprinted, neither actual sins nor even original sin would be forgiven; they are washed externally only, the soul is not cleansed. The same applies to the temporal punishment due to sin. An adult receiving Baptism with due dispositions, is like a child after baptism, free from sin and all punishment due to it; if he were to die without committing any sin after his baptism, his soul would go straight to heaven, without passing through Purgatory. This is the practical belief of the Catholic Church, and that is why no works of satisfaction are imposed on the newly-baptized adult, because all eternal and temporal pains due to sin are taken away by Baptism.

154. *Q. Is Baptism necessary to salvation?*

A. Baptism is necessary to salvation, because without it we cannot enter the kingdom of heaven.

Various heretics have at different times denied the necessity of Baptism. The Pelagians pretended that Baptism is necessary indeed to obtain the kingdom of heaven, but not for the remission of original sin. The heretics of a more recent date have gone a step further, and declare that Baptism is not necessary to enter the kingdom of heaven. Some claim it is nothing but an external sign, a certificate showing the recipient to have been regenerated. Others pretend that it is unnecessary for children, at least for the children of the faithful. The Catholic Church teaches that Baptism is necessary to all, even to the children, and that without it none can enter the kingdom of heaven. The Council of Trent pronounces anathema against all those who say that Baptism is optional, that is, unnecessary to salvation. The obligation to receive Baptism proceeds from the command given by Christ, when He sent His apostles to preach and to baptize. This law took effect, when it was sufficiently promulgated. The law was not promulgated at the same time in all countries, but it is now in all places where the light of the Gospel has penetrated. It is not our object here to enquire how the adults and the children were saved before the law of Christ was promulgated. When we say that Baptism is necessary to salvation, we mean that it is so, not only because it is commanded, but also because it is now a necessary means of salvation; for children the actual reception of Baptism is necessary and also for adults either its actual reception, or the serious desire of receiving it, when its actual reception would be impossible. The testimony of Holy Scripture is so clear on this point, that it seems doing the words violence by calling the Catholic doctrine into question.

Christ said to Nicodemus: "Unless a man be born again of water and the Holy Ghost, he cannot enter the kingdom of Heaven" (John 3:5). Christ had first spoken to him of a second birth; Nicodemus misunderstood Christ's words, and the Saviour proceeded to explain His words, so as not to leave room for doubt. His words apply to children as well as to adults. Christ makes no exceptions. Who shall deny that children are men? Our adversaries by

misunderstanding the words of Christ: "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved" (Mark 16:16), excepted the children. They argue that before being baptized one must believe, and that, as children cannot believe, they should not be baptized either. To be consequent, they should have read the next sentence: "But he that believeth not shall be condemned." In their desire to protest, they are forced to condemn all the little ones. The Catholic Church has more regard for the souls of the little ones. She is indeed not at liberty to modify the words of the Saviour, nor can she exempt any one from the obligation the Saviour imposed on all men, but she makes all share alike in the benefits of the redemption. Baptism is necessary to all; to deny Baptism to children would be to disinherit a large percentage of the human race, who die before attaining the use of reason. The Apostles acted as the Catholic Church acts to-day. Scripture records that fact that they baptized whole families (Acts 16:15, 33). Must we not suppose that there were children among them? This has been the constant Tradition and the perpetual practice of the Church. Origen, who died in 254, wrote about the practice of the Church in his day: "The Church has received from the Apostles the tradition to give baptism even to children."

Reason also tells us that there is nothing to prevent a child from receiving the benefit of baptism, as there is nothing to prevent a child from being made by will heir to an estate. Christ makes them heirs of His kingdom, provided they have the seal of Baptism. To one who would refuse to admit the necessity of Baptism for children, because so many are precluded from that benefit, by dying before they can be baptized, we would exclaim with St. Paul: "O the depths of the riches of the wisdom and of the knowledge of God! How incomprehensible are His judgments, and how unsearchable His ways!" (Rom. 11:33.)

155. *Q. Who can administer Baptism?*

A. The priest is the ordinary minister of Baptism; but in case of necessity, any one who has the use of reason can baptize.

There is no difference of opinion among Catholic theologians in regard to the minister of Baptism . . . They unanimously teach the following propositions: 1st, The right to baptize belongs *ex officio* to the Bishops and the

priests, in such a manner, however, that for the lawful administration of Baptism the priests are subordinate to and dependent on the Bishops. As the power to absolve is granted to the priest at the time of his ordination, but as the act of absolving is an act of jurisdiction, which belongs properly to the bishops, and that for this reason the priest cannot use that power without the consent of the Bishop, so also is his power of baptizing limited by the superior authority of the Bishop. Episcopal authority, however, can only limit the lawful not the valid administration of Baptism.

2nd, The right to baptize also belongs in virtue of their office to the deacons, but only in the absence of the priests or by their command. They are not, therefore, the ordinary ministers of Baptism. We read in the Acts of the Apostles that Philip, who was only a deacon, baptized the eunuch of the queen of Ethiopia.

3rd, All Catholic theologians also agree in saying that the laity cannot solemnly baptize, nor even privately in the presence of a priest or a deacon, or even in their absence, except in a case of necessity.

4th, Any one who has the use of reason and is baptized, can lawfully baptize in case of necessity. Never has there been any doubt about it in the Church. The parents, however, should not baptize their own children, unless there is no one else to do so, on account of the relationship they would thereby incur.

5th, Baptism conferred by heretics has always been considered valid by the Church. This is clear from the controversy between St. Cyprian and Pope St. Stephen. Agrippinus, the predecessor of St. Cyprian in the see of Carthage had decreed, that those baptized by heretics should be rebaptized. St. Cyprian afterwards in two councils held in 255 and 256 decreed the same. The matter was referred to Rome. Pope St. Stephen strenuously objected, and replied that apostolic tradition taught that those baptized by heretics were not to be baptized again. The Pope, at the same time, sent threatening letters to Cyprian and to the other bishops, who had shared his error, if they did not retract. It is not, however, sure whether St. Stephen claimed that his decision should be a matter of faith or merely of discipline; he did not proclaim it *ex cathedra* as a dogma of faith; he merely rejected the opinion of St. Cyprian as contrary to tradition.

For this reason when a heretic desires to enter the one true fold, enquiry must first be made about his baptism. If there is no doubt as to his being *validly* baptized, he cannot be baptized again, not even under condition. If there is a reasonable doubt, he is baptized under condition and then, after confession, absolved also under condition.

6th, Catholic theologians also teach that even non-baptized persons can baptize validly in the case of necessity, provided it is rightly done. St. Augustine in his day was doubtful about it, and said he dared not settle the question, as it had not been defined in a general council. The doubt, however, has been definitely solved nearly four centuries ago, in the council of Florence. This council decreed that in case of necessity, any man or woman, Christian, pagan or Jew, can baptize, provided they use the proper matter and form, and have the right intention.

Since on the part of the minister of baptism no faith or virtue or ordination is required, there is therefore no reason why baptism conferred by a pagan or a Jew would not be considered valid, if all that is necessary to the essence of baptism be carried out.

156. *Q. How is Baptism given?*

A. Whoever baptizes should pour water on the head of the person to be baptized, and say while pouring the water: "I baptize thee in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost."

The Catechism here gives us the essentials of baptism, the pouring of the water and the words prescribed, or as the theologians call them, the matter and the form of the Sacrament. When explaining the question, "What is the Baptism of water," we will prove that pouring water on the head is not the only way to apply validly the matter of this Sacrament.

The first point to explain is; which is the matter in the Sacrament of Baptism. The Council of Trent proclaims the teaching of the Church on this point in the following words: "If one say that true and natural water is not of necessity in Baptism, and therefore pretends that the words of Our Lord Jesus Christ: Except one be born again of water and the Holy Ghost, etc., must be taken metaphorically, let him be anathema." True, that is, real not metaphorical water, and natural water, excluding all artificial water, is

then the water necessary for Baptism. This is proved 1st, from Scripture: "Except one be born *of water* and the Holy Ghost, he can not enter the kingdom of God" (John 3:5). Water and the Holy Ghost are here said to cause the effects of Baptism in our soul.

After the eunuch had been instructed sufficiently by the deacon St. Philip, and when they had come to a certain water, the eunuch said: "See, here is water, what doth hinder me from being baptized?" (Acts 8:36). St. Philip does not remark to the eunuch that metaphorical water was meant.

2nd, Tradition is also unanimous on this point: "What is the Baptism of Christ?" asks St. Augustine. "The laver of water in the word. Take away the water, there is no Baptism; take away the word, and there is no Baptism."

3rd, The practice of the Church is the interpreter of this perpetual Tradition. Witness the ancient baptisteries, all built in the form of a reservoir, or water basin.

Which is the form of Baptism? It is the words as given by the Catechism. "I baptize thee in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost." The Council of Trent also proclaimed this an article of faith, without, however, settling definitely whether this has always been the only and exclusive form of Baptism. Some pretended that at the time of the Apostles, through a special divine dispensation, Baptism conferred *in the name of Christ* or *of the Lord Jesus,* was valid; most theologians absolutely deny it.

Christ, when sending out the Apostles on their mission of spiritual conquest, taught them the form of Baptism: "Going, teach ye all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost."

Tradition and the perpetual practice of the Church, as shown by the rituals of all churches, prove that the Church from apostolic times has always held these words to be the necessary form of Baptism.

157. *Q. How many kinds of Baptism are there?*

A. There are three kinds of Baptism: Baptism of water, of desire, and of blood.

The Catechism must not be misunderstood as hereby meaning that of these three kinds one is as good as the other to the soul. It means only that in certain circum-

stances the baptisms of desire and of blood cause in the soul the chief effects for which the Sacrament of Baptism was instituted, viz.: the infusion of sanctifying grace. On account of this effect they have been called Baptism, although the name, in its exact meaning, does not apply to them. There is only one Sacrament of Baptism, and that is the baptism of water; baptism of desire and baptism of blood do not contain what constitutes the essence of a Sacrament. For the validity of a Sacrament matter and form are required; certain words are absolutely necessary. In martrydom no words are required. For the baptism of desire there is no particular formula of words required, and there is no external sign; its efficacy depends entirely upon the disposition of the soul. The second great difference between the Sacrament of Baptism, and the baptism of desire and of blood consists in this, that the Sacraments are the ordinary remedies of sin and within reach of the immense majority of mankind at all times. Martyrdom cannot be called an ordinary remedy, nor can it be had at all times; it is evidently the privilege of the very few. Considering the dispositions required for the baptism of desire to effect the remission of sins and the infusion of sanctifying grace, it is rather an extraordinary gift, whilst the baptism of water is the ordinary means. Thirdly, the Sacraments are causes of grace, inasmuch as they are the acts of God through His ministers; but martyrdom is not the action of God through His ministers, but the action of the devil through his satellites. Hence it follows that it constitutes only a disposition to justification, whereas the Sacrament is the acting instrumental cause of it.

As the baptism of desire or of blood is not a Sacrament, it imprints no character. Therefore after one would have been justified by the baptism of desire, the obligation would remain to receive the baptism of water, if possible. Besides it is only the baptism of water which disposes us to receive the other Sacraments; the baptism of desire would give us no right or proper disposition to them.

158. *Q. What is the Baptism of water?*

A. Baptism of water is that which is given by pouring water over the head of the person to be baptized, and saying at the same time: "I baptize thee in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost."

The above is a definition of what is the Sacrament of Baptism, or rather an enumeration of all that is necessary for its administration; nevertheless, as we shall explain, it may be validly administered by applying its matter in a different manner. Some non-Catholic denominations look upon the applying of the water by immersion as the essential matter of the Sacrament, and proclaim the mode of applying it by aspersion or infusion as null and void. Whilst Catholics hold that Baptism by immersion is just as valid as by aspersion or infusion, yet they claim that it is not the only way to confer Baptism; nay, that Baptism by infusion is more in keeping with the nature of the Sacrament. As the applying of water by aspersion or infusion is so much alike, it will be sufficient to show that the manner of baptizing generally practised in the Catholic Church is thoroughly Scriptural and in keeping with sound reason.

The Council of Trent declared that the doctrine of the Church in regard to Baptism is true, hence it follows that the manner of baptizing must be unquestionably valid.

1st, It was the practice of all antiquity. The Fathers generally understood the following prophecy of Ezechiel (36:15) as applying to the Baptism of the New Law. "I will pour upon you clean water, and you shall be cleansed from all your filthiness."

2nd, Baptism was instituted as a means of salvation for all. Must we not infer from this, that the manner of baptizing, which can be applied to the greatest number, is not contrary to Scripture, even if we had no Scriptural proof in its favor? It could certainly not have been the intention of the Saviour that the manner of administering baptism should naturally endanger the life of the baptized in very many cases. The Church has from the very beginning held as valid, Baptism by infusion, conferred on the sick in bed. Baptism is a Sacrament for men of every country. It cannot be denied that in many parts of the earth, it would be very inconvenient, nay almost impossible, to keep always sufficient water for baptizing by immersion.

3rd, Admitting the infallibility of the Church, we cannot but admit the validity of Baptism by infusion; she sanctioned it at all times; if she had erred in a matter of such importance, she could make no further claim to infallibility. The great Martyr St. Lawrence, in his prison,

baptized Romanus by pouring water over him from an urn. In using this mode of baptizing, which was the only available one, he did what other glorious prisoners for the faith had done before him. St. Paul had baptized the keeper of the prison and all his household, while he was in prison; although it is not stated, it does not appear that he could have done so by immersion. St. Peter converted his jailors in the Mamertine prison, and baptized with water procured in a miraculous manner; the prison as it is to-day amply proves that St. Peter could not have baptized Processus and Martinian by immersion. The acts of the Apostles tell us that Peter baptized once three thousand people, and on another occasion five thousand; who will say and prove that Peter baptized them by immersion?

Christ instituted an exterior sign of interior grace; external washing of the body was to signify the interior cleansing of the soul. The effect is equally signified by any of the three manners of applying the water of baptism.

The Catholic Church has chosen for general use in her ritual baptism by infusion, sanctioned by Apostolic tradition, and best adapted to all countries and all peoples. While pouring the water over the head, if possible, or any other principal part of the body, if the head can not be reached, the words appointed by Christ must be pronounced at the same time. "I baptize thee" etc. Any mutilation of these words would invalidate the form of Baptism.

Various ceremonies accompany the solemn administration of Baptism, all tending to show the different effects of the Sacrament in our souls; but they are not of absolute necessity.

159. *Q. What is Baptism of desire?*

A. Baptism of desire is an ardent wish to receive Baptism, and to do all that God has ordained for our salvation.

In this and the next question the Catechism treats of two means, which may supply place of the baptism of water as to some of its effects.

As sin is the turning away from God to the creatures, so must baptism of desire be a conversion from creatures to God. As sin may be more or less heinous, so may the conversion to God be more or less perfect. The Catechism must not be understood to mean that any conversion to God

is sufficient to produce the effects of Baptism, or that any conversion to God may be called baptism of desire. It must be an ardent wish, accompanied by or included in a perfect conversion, which itself must include perfect contrition and charity.

There is no doubt that a true conversion supplies the place of the baptism of water, when it is not out of contempt but out of necessity that one dies without the baptism of water. This theory is altogether in keeping with Holy Scripture, as clearly expressed by Ezechiel (18:22): "If the wicked do penance for all his sins, I will not remember all his iniquities." The Fathers of the Church have almost without exception understood this and similar texts as meaning, that true conversion supplies the place of the baptism of water. St. Ambrose says in his funeral oration of Valentinian: "I have lost one whom I was about to regenerate in the water of Baptism, but he has not lost the grace he hoped for." The Council of Trent, echoing the sentiment of the universal Church, therefore, declared that Baptism is necessary either in reality or in desire. True conversion agrees with Baptism in the name and in some of its effects. Holy Scripture applies the name of baptism to it: "John was preaching the baptism of penance unto remission of sins" (Mark 1:4). St. Paul in his first Epistle to the Corinthians says (15:29): "What shall they do that are baptized for the dead, if the dead rise not again at all? Why are they then baptized for them?" No proper explanation can be given of this text, unless we understand by baptism the works of penance which the living practise for the dead. Besides, penance likens man unto Christ's passion and death to a certain extent, as does the baptism of water. Desire may be more or less intense in proportion as conversion is more or less perfect, the intensity of the desire has an effect on the remission of the penalties due to sin. Perfect conversion blots them all out, as was the case with Mary Magdalen, and the good thief and thousands of others, who are among the elect through the means of baptism of desire. Baptism of desire properly means an interior conversion, which takes away all sins and all penalties for sin; should it not be such as to take away all penalty, it is only improperly a baptism of desire.

The instrumental cause of salvation through the baptism of desire is not a mere faith in Christ as heretics would

have it, but conversion or penance itself. The Fathers of the Church never ascribe the efficacy of this baptism to faith alone, but to penance and to the ardent desire to receive the baptism of water.

The ardent desire to receive the baptism of water must, indeed, be accompanied by the serious will to do all that God has ordained for our salvation, otherwise there would be no real conversion. Hence it follows that if one were to receive remission of all sins by means of this true conversion, he would not be saved, if he wilfully neglected or refused to receive the baptism of water, if an opportunity afterwards presented itself.

160. *Q. What is Baptism of blood?*

A. Baptism of blood is the shedding of one's blood for the faith of Christ.

Baptism of blood is martyrdom, which is called and really is a sort of Baptism. Scripture and Tradition prove martyrdom to be such. Jesus once said to the sons of Zebedee: "Can you drink of the chalice that I drink of, or be baptized with the baptism wherewith I am baptized?" (Mark 10:38). The baptism alluded to here by Christ was His bloody passion. Those who shed their blood for Him are thus baptized with Him. The Fathers of the Church always considered martyrdom in that light. Tertullian speaking of it says: "This is a baptism which brings the laver of regeneration, when not yet received, or returns it when lost." St. Cyprian calls martyrdom a baptism of even greater excellence than the baptism of water. Another reason why martyrdom is called baptism, is because it has three of the effects of the baptism of water; 1st, It likens man unto Christ's passion and death; 2nd, It forgives original sin and also all actual sins, if any; 3rd, It remits all punishment due to sin, both temporal and eternal. As these effects are proper to Baptism, and are also produced in the soul by martyrdom, it is rightfully called Baptism.

It is certain that martyrdom makes man even more conformable to the death of Christ than the baptism of water; the first being a real, the other only a sacramental conformity. It is equally certain that martyrdom remits punishments due to actual sins, so that the martyrs are admitted immediately to the beatific vision.

This is clear from the fact that the Church never prays

for the martyrs, but rather commends herself to them. It is the most general opinion of theologians, that martyrdom confers sanctifying grace of itself, *ex opere operato*, like the Sacraments, not merely on account of the dispositions of the martyrs, so that no other dispositions are demanded on their part, than for the baptism of water, viz.: in adults an imperfect contrition, a beginning of faith and charity would be sufficient; in children not even these dispositions are required. They are justified and saved in virtue of shedding their blood for the faith of Christ. For the children we can quote as an instance those that were killed by Herod shortly after the birth of Christ. The Church has always honored the Holy Innocents as true martyrs. St. Thomas explains that the effects of martyrdom are not due to the dispositions of the martyr. If so, he says, they could proceed either from their enduring the pain or from the fervor of their charity. It could not be that the mere enduring of the pain could produce those effects, because many a martyr had for his previous crimes deserved death a thousand times; so slight a suffering as beheading would not be a full atonement for their sins, and yet if they are martyrs, all punishment is forgiven them. Thousands of confessors have suffered more than they, and yet all punishment is not always forgiven them. The effects of martyrdom cannot be ascribed to charity, because many confessors have had greater charity than many martyrs, and yet they have not had all punishment remitted to them. Martyrs with even the first beginning of charity, by the very fact that they are martyrs, obtain the remission of all punishment. We must, therefore, admit that martyrdom confers grace in virtue of the divine promise and institution. As a proof of this the Church never requires previous sanctity for the honor it bestows upon a martyr; her sole inquiry is directed to the fact, whether the alleged martyr died for the faith of Christ. If the dispositions were the instrumental cause of grace, there would be no difference between the baptism of blood and the baptism of desire, and yet the Church has always believed in three sorts of baptism. Therefore we must believe that the shedding of one's blood for the faith of Christ is, like the baptism of water, the instrumental cause of sanctifying grace and of the remission of all the punishment due to sin.

161. *Q. Is baptism of desire or blood sufficient to produce the effects of the Baptism of water?*

A. Baptism of desire or of blood is sufficient to produce the effects of the Baptism of water, if it is impossible to receive the Baptism of water.

We have previously explained that baptism of desire or of blood is not a Sacrament; hence it follows that there is one of the effects of the Sacrament of Baptism, which it cannot produce, the character. As to the infusion of sanctifying grace and its consequences, the explanations of the two previous questions show when baptism of desire or of blood is sufficient to produce the effects of the baptism of water. The mission entrusted to the Apostles to baptize all nations imposes on all the obligation of receiving the Sacrament of Baptism, if possible. We have seen that no other dispositions are required in a martyr, than for one who receives the Sacrament of Baptism, in order that it may produce the same effects, with the exception only of the sacramental character. Baptism of desire supposes other dispositions, as upon these dispositions depends the effects, with the exclusion again of the sacramental character.

162. *Q. What do we promise in Baptism?*

A. In Baptism we promise to renounce Satan with all his works and pomps.

Before the water of Baptism is poured on our heads we promise to renounce Satan with all his works and pomps. The practice of putting these questions to which our godparents responded, by renouncing for us all our mortal enemies, dates back to the very first ages of the Church. Tertullian and St. Cyril of Alexandria speak of this renunciation, and remind the faithful of the obligations it imposes. We learn from St. Jerome that in his day the catechumen in renouncing Satan, turned to the West, the side of night and darkness, and then turned to the East to adore Jesus Christ, the Sun of justice, who said of Himself: "I am the light of the world" (John 8:12). Renouncing Satan means a solemn declaration that we shall have nothing in common with him, that we shall never listen to him, and that we give up his party forever, to follow Jesus Christ in the path of holiness and justice, which He traced out for us. Before Baptism we were enemies

of God, children of wrath and slaves of the devil; we now break with the devil to return to God.

The works of the devil are all wilful thoughts, words, actions and omissions contrary to the will of God, forbidden as they are by His commandments, or by the commandments of the Church. Sins are called the works of the devil, because he was the first sinner by his revolt against God, and because every day and at all times of the day he tempts us and endeavors to induce us to break the commandments of God.

The pomps of Satan are the false maxims and the vanities of the world. The maxims of the world are certain principles by which the world is guided and which are opposed to the laws imposed on us by Jesus Christ. Such are, for instance; "We must enjoy ourselves, wherever we can; happy are the rich; happy are those who can always have a good time; who have nothing to suffer; it is cowardice not to avenge an injury;" and the like. The maxims laid down in Holy Scripture are diametrically opposed to these. The pomps of the devil, or vanities of the world is all that gratifies and dazzles the eyes. "Vanity of vanities and all is vanity," said Ecclesiastes (1:2). In Baptism we take upon ourselves the obligation of practising the Christian religion, which forbids us ever to be attached to them or to seek our supreme happiness in them. A truly Christian life is incompatible with the pursuits of the vanities of the world. We may rightfully enjoy many good things in this life, but we should not place our happiness in them. It is then very proper that, at the threshold of the Christian life, we should make an open profession of the principles by which we are to be guided in the future, and renounce forever our spiritual enemies, and whatever may deprive us of all the blessings bestowed upon us by Baptism.

163. *Q. Why is the name of a saint given in Baptism?*

A. The name of a saint is given in Baptism, in order that the person baptized may imitate his virtues and have him for a protector.

To obtain celestial happiness we must follow the foot-steps of the saints, and of those in particular whose names we received in Baptism; they are the patterns according to which we should shape our lives. The saints, whose names we bear, are not only our models, they are also our pro-

tectors. They take undoubtedly a great interest in us and they plead our cause unceasingly before Him, whom they now behold face to face. That is why they are also our patron saints. No names should be given to children except those of saints recognized by the Catholic Church. The practice of giving to children the name of a saint is very ancient in the Church and may have been derived from the custom of the faithful in the Old Law, who named their children the day of their circumcision, which was a figure of Baptism. The name of Jesus was given the Saviour the day of His circumcision. Our baptismal name is, therefore, called our Christian name.

164. *Q. Why are godfathers and godmothers given in Baptism?*

A. Godfathers and godmothers are given in Baptism, in order that they may promise in the name of the child, what the child itself would promise, if it had the use of reason.

Besides the ministers who administer the Sacrament of Baptism, there is also another kind of ministers associated with its administration. We call them godparents or sponsors. The Catechism of the Council of Trent, published by order of Popes Pius V and Clement XIII, directs those having charge of souls to instruct carefully the faithful as to the nature of this office, as it is of importance to nearly all of them. They are requested to explain, first, why, besides the minister, there should also be sponsors. This will appear very proper, says the Catechism; if we remember that Baptism is a spiritual regeneration, by which we are born children of God; for St. Peter says: "As new-born babes, desire the rational milk without guile" (1 Pet. 2:2). Since then those who are so born, need a teacher to direct and instruct them, it is necessary that they be committed to the care and prudence of some one, from whom they may learn the precepts of the Christian religion, and in order that they may grow up in Christ by degrees, until with the help of God they may become perfect. And the reason of this is because the priests assigned to different places cannot, for lack of time, undertake this private spiritual education, so necessary to a subsequent Christian life. St. Dionysius gives us a striking testimony of this very ancient practice: "Our divine masters," so he calls

the Apostles, "have thought well that children should be so presented for Baptism, that the natural parents of the child entrust them to the care of a man learned in holy things, as to a teacher; who is to guide them during their life." From the foregoing words it is plain that this office cannot be entrusted to every one; the Church deems certain classes of people unworthy of it. Such are, infidels, heretics, schismatics, the excommunicated, public sinners, those, for instance, who neglect their Easter duties, those who never go to church when they can, or those who lead a sinful life by having contracted marriage contrary to the laws of the Church.

The Council of Trent decrees that there be but one or at most two sponsors, and this for two reasons; first, because the multiplicity of teachers would a detriment to the spiritual education of the child; and secondly, in order not to multiply the impediments of marriage. The office of sponsors creates a spiritual relationship between the sponsors and the godchildren, between the sponsors and the parents of their godchildren. This relationship renders a subsequent marriage between such parties null and void, unless a dispensation has been previously obtained.

165. *Q. What is the obligation of a godfather and a godmother?*

A. The obligation of a godfather and a godmother is to instruct the child in its religious duties, if the parents neglect to do so, or die.

The obligations of godparents are nowadays, says the Catechism of the Council of Trent, so neglected, that hardly anything of this sacred duty is left but the name; so much so that people hardly look upon it as imposing a sacred obligation. Generally speaking, godparents should realize that they have contracted the obligation to look upon their spiritual children as entrusted to their care, not only for a time, but for as long as they live. They ought to do all in their power to form them to a Christian life, and induce them to fulfil faithfully what they have promised for them the day of their Baptism. Let us hear what St. Dionysius writes concerning the sentiments that should animate the sponsors: "I promise carefully to exhort and to induce this child, when it will be old enough to understand its religion, to renounce all that is contrary to good and to pro-

fess and fulfil faithfully the promises which it now makes to God." St. Augustine expresses himself nearly in the same terms: "I admonish you before all, both men and women who have held children over the baptismal fount, to remember that you are their sponsors before God, that you are answerable for them." It is proper, indeed, that when a man takes an office upon himself, he should never grow weary of discharging its duties; and that after he has promised to be the teacher and guide of another he should not abandon him as long as he is in need of his help and counsels. St. Augustine expresses in a few words what godparents should teach their godchildren: "They must admonish them to preserve chastity, to love justice, to maintain charity, and especially to teach them at a very early age the Apostles' Creed, the Lord's Prayer, the ten commandments and the first principles of the Christian religion." These duties are the same now as they have always been; they flow from the very nature of the obligations the sponsors have assumed. These duties are inherent in that sacred office. The Catechism, however, mentions two cases, in which the fulfilling of these duties become still more imperious, viz.: when the natural parents neglect their children, or when they die. When parents fulfil their duties as Christians and educate their children in the fear and discipline of the Lord, as Scripture and nature demand, the godparents may step aside, or rather may only help and encourage the parents in that most difficult of all tasks. But when they neglect these duties, as unfortunately is so often the case in our days, the godparents should remember what they promised and leave nothing undone to fulfil their obligations towards their godchildren. After the death of the parents this duty devolves altogether upon them, and they should never rest satisfied until they have exhausted every prudent means to promote the spiritual welfare of the children. These obligations should, therefore, not be undertaken too lightly, nor discharged too carelessly to the great detriment of the souls of the children, who, as the Church desires, should be protected in their spiritual rights.

LESSON FIFTEENTH

ON CONFIRMATION

166. *Q. What is Confirmation?*

A. Confirmation is a Sacrament through which we receive the Holy Ghost to make us strong and perfect Christians and soldiers of Jesus Christ.

The Protestants of our day have, almost without exception, rejected Confirmation, as a Sacrament. Whilst they cannot deny that in the primitive Church there was such a rite as confirmation, yet they claim that this rite was never instituted by Christ as a Sacrament, but was introduced by the Church merely as a pious and useful ceremony. They have invented for themselves different ceremonies as a substitute for it. We shall prove from various sources, that Confirmation is, like Baptism, a Sacrament of the New Law.

The essence of a Sacrament demands three things; 1st, A promise of grace; 2nd, A visible sign by which that promise is realized; 3rd, The divine institution or a divine command, whereby the Church is ordered to administer this Sacrament. If these three points can logically be proved from Scripture, even he who does not believe in the infallibility of the Church, must acquiesce. A Catholic admits it even without such proof, because an infallible Church proposes it to his belief as a dogma of faith.

1st. To one at all familiar with the New Testament numerous texts must be more than sufficient evidence to show that Christ did actually promise such a grace. He promised His Apostles to send the Holy Ghost upon them, as a Paraclete to console them in adversity (John 14:16). In the following chapter (v. 26) of St. John, He promised to send them the same Paraclete to make them strong and unflinching in the testimony of the truth. A little further (c. 16) He repeats the same promise in order to convince the world of sin, and justice, and of judgment; that is, He

promises to send them the Holy Ghost to strengthen them, that they may refute the infidelity of men, testify to the justice of Christ and announce that the prince of this world has been judged already. Appearing to His Apostles after His resurrection, He told them: "Stay you in the city till you be endued with power from on high" (Luke 24:49). Just before His glorious Ascension He said to the Apostles: "You shall receive the power of the Holy Ghost coming upon you and you shall be witnesses unto Me" (Acts 1:8). Who will deny that Christ in all the foregoing texts made a solemn promise to those who had already been baptized, and were in the state of grace, of a more abundant grace of the Holy Ghost, whereby they may become strong in the confession of faith?

2nd. The second essential for a Sacrament is a visible sign, the matter and form, whereby that promise is realized and applied. This visible sign for the Sacrament of Confirmation is the applying of chrism and the imposition of hands, or rather the anointing in which both are comprised together with the requisite words. In regard to the matter of this Sacrament, differences of opinion formerly existed. Pope Benedict XIV by virtue of his supreme office, has set the question at rest. We quote his words: "Let it be said, what is beyond controversy, namely, that in the Latin Church the Sacrament of Confirmation is conferred by using holy chrism mixed with balm and blessed by the Bishop, and by the sign of the cross which the minister of the Sacrament makes on the forehead of the receiver, while the minister pronounces the words of the form." The imposition of hands required is no other than the act of anointing. Rome has since declared that, if one should be absent during the general imposition of hands preceding the anointing, and present only for the anointing with the words, Confirmation should not be repeated, not even under condition. That there is to be, however, an imposition of hands cannot be denied, because Scripture mentions this ceremony of Confirmation in particular. The following passages of Holy Scripture plainly describe a ceremony proper to the Sacrament of Confirmation, only leaving unrecorded a part of the matter and the words constituting the form. Christian Tradition however clearly proves that the Apostles conferred Confirmation in essentially the same way as Catholic Bishops do.

The Apostles received the grace given to others by Confirmation, on Pentecost day, by a miracle, in an extraordinary manner, not by the Sacrament, as is evident from the narrative of that wonderful occurrence in the second chapter of the Acts. The others were to receive that grace through the ministry of the Apostles and in the manner appointed by Christ: "They laid their hands upon them, and they received the Holy Ghost" (Acts 8:17). They had prayed that they might receive the Holy Ghost. That this is the means by which the promised grace of the Holy Ghost was applied, is clear from the effects, for the Holy Ghost came on all, on whom the Apostles laid their hands. Again that this gift conveyed by the ministry of the Apostles is the same as that promised to the Apostles, is proved from the testimony of St. Peter, who in his sermon to the people promised them the same gift which he had received, if they would believe and be baptized; he quotes the prophet Joel, who prophesied that this gift would be poured out, not only upon the Apostles, but upon all flesh (Acts 2). Scripture, therefore, clearly indicates that the Holy Ghost was given to the people in a certain manner which we call the Sacrament of Confirmation.

The Gospel does not mention when or where Christ instituted Confirmation, or when He ordered His Apostles to confer that Sacrament. But we know that there must have been a mandate from Christ, as otherwise we should be obliged to admit that the Apostles were impostors. How would they otherwise have imposed their hands on all those who were baptized, that they might receive the Holy Ghost? That Confirmation has always been considered by the Catholic Church as a Sacrament of divine institution, is clearly proved by the uninterrupted testimony of the Fathers. St. Clement, the second successor of St. Peter says: "All must without delay be born again, and then be signed by the Bishops to receive the sevenfold grace of the Holy Ghost." St. Melchiades, being asked which was the greatest Sacrament, Baptism or Confirmation, replied; "Know ye that both are great Sacraments."

The Fathers of the First Council of Arles held in 440, decreed not to baptize again heretics returning to the Church, if they had been rightly baptized, but the Bishops should impose their hands upon them, that they might receive the Holy Ghost, because the heretics of those days, like those of to-day, conferred Baptism but not Confirmation. St.

Denis, one of the Greek Fathers says: "They lead the baptized dressed in white garments to the Pontiff, who signs him with a divine and godmaking salve." Tertullian, of the Latin Fathers, gives us, in a few words, the whole ritual of Confirmation. "The body is anointed," he says, "that the soul may be consecrated; the body is signed, that the soul may be strengthened; the body is shadowed by the imposition of the hand, that the soul may be enlightened by the Spirit." Who can logically deny that Confirmation is a Sacrament?

By Confirmation we receive the Holy Ghost, not in a visible manner, as He came down on the Apostles on Pentecost day, but in an invisible manner to give us a greater fulness of His graces. Confirmation, being a Sacrament of the living, presupposes the state of grace, the presence of the Holy Ghost in our hearts; it gives us an increase of sanctifying grace accompanied by the seven gifts of the Holy Ghost. We say that in this Sacrament the Holy Ghost, that is, the fulness of grace, is given us in a particular manner, not because a greater grace cannot be given, but because it imparts that grace whereby man is so perfected as to be called a perfect Christian. It increases in a particular manner, the virtues of faith and fortitude. In the beginning of the Church other extraordinary favors, such as the gifts of miracles and languages, were very often imparted with it.

The sacramental grace of Confirmation, given at its administration, or later when an opportunity offers to profess the faith courageously and constantly in our heart, words and actions, is the strength and courage to repel all temptations against faith, and to suffer all hardships for its sake.

167. *Q. Who administers Confirmation?*

A. The Bishops are the ordinary ministers of Confirmation.

The Council of Trent pronounces anathema on all who would say that not the Bishop only, but every priest is the ordinary minister of the Sacrament of Confirmation. The Bishop is said to be the ordinary minister of Confirmation, because in virtue of the powers conferred on him, he is consecrated to confer this Sacrament. The answer of the Catechism supposes that there is also an extraordinary minister of Confirmation. It is plain from the practice of the

Catholic Church that the Sovereign Pontiff can also delegate to a simple priest the power to administer Confirmation. Certain heretics of the sixteenth century, before doing away with Confirmation altogether, tried to convince themselves that this power did not belong to the Bishops only, but to all priests. Scripture however proves, as well as Tradition, that the Bishops only have this power in virtue of the fulness of their priesthood. The Acts of the Apostles tell us (c. 8) that the deacon Philip converted the people of Samaria and baptized both men and women. Now when the Apostles, who were in Jerusalem, had heard this they sent thither to them Peter and John to confer unto them another Sacrament, which we call Confirmation. St. Paul (c. 19) afterwards administered Confirmation to some who had most probably been baptized by others.

It seems inconceivable that the Apostles only impose hands, and even go from one place to another to do so, if this ministry did not belong to the first degree of Holy Orders, viz: The Episcopate. The whole Christian Tradition proves that it has always been so understood in the Church. St. Cyprian writes: "Those, who are baptized in the Church are presented to the prelates of the Church, that by their prayer and imposition of hands they may receive the Holy Ghost." Pope Innocent I writes as follows; "In as far as the confirming of children is concerned, it is clear that it cannot be lawfully done by any one else than the Bishops. It is allowed to the priests, whether in the presence of the Bishop or in his absence, to anoint with chrism consecrated by the Bishop whilst baptizing, but they cannot sign the forehead with the same oil; for this belongs to the Bishops only, when they give the Holy Ghost."

It is clear, besides, from the practice of the Church, that the Bishop only is the ordinary minister of Confirmation, and that the priest has not this faculty by virtue of his priestly order. The law of the Church forbids priests to administer this Sacrament; now if a simple priest had this power by virtue of his ordination, there could be no such general prohibition preventing him even from confirming one in danger of death. Pope Nicholas I in the ninth century, ordered to confirm again all those whom Greek priests, empowered by the schismatical patriarch Photius, had confirmed in Bulgaria. Bulgaria then belonged to the Western Patriarchate, and those priests should have re-

ceived their delegation not from Photius, but from the Pope. These priests sharing the errors of Photius, thought that the ordinary powers of the priesthood gave them the right to administer Confirmation.

There can be no doubt but that the Pope, by virtue of his Supreme Authority has the power to delegate that faculty to a simple priest. At times it is so given. For the validity, however, of Confirmation conferred by a simple priest, two things are necessary; 1st, a delegation from the Sovereign Pontiff, and 2nd, the priest so delegated must use oil consecrated by the Bishop.

168. *Q. How does the Bishop give Confirmation?*

A. The Bishop extends his hands over those who are to be confirmed, prays that they may receive the Holy Ghost, and anoints the forehead of each with holy chrism in the form of a cross.

The Catechism does not give here all the ceremonies of Confirmation; it mentions only the three principal ones, the last being of absolute necessity. The three ceremonies requiring an explanation are: 1st, the imposition of the hands; 2nd, the prayer; 3rd, the anointing.

1st, The imposition of the hands, like all other ceremonies, is meant to express some of the effects of Confirmation in our souls. By Confirmation the Holy Ghost comes down upon us with the fulness of His graces. The imposition of hands is meant to express that the Holy Ghost takes in a more particular manner possession of our souls. The ceremony of imposing hands is mentioned already in Leviticus. Whilst administering Confirmation, immediately before extending his hands, the Bishop says: "May the Holy Ghost come down upon you, and may the power of the Most High preserve you from all sin. Amen." Then after several prayers whereby he calls God to his aid and to that of those who are to be confirmed, he extends his hands, saying the following prayer: "Almighty and eternal God, who hast deigned to regenerate by water and the Holy Ghost, Thy servants here present, and who hast granted them remission of all their sins, send down upon them from heaven Thy Holy Ghost and Paraclete with His seven gifts. R. Amen. The Spirit of wisdom and understanding. R. Amen. The Spirit of counsel and fortitude. R. Amen. The Spirit of knowledge and piety. R. Amen. Fill them with the Spirit

of Thy fear and sign them in Thy mercy with the sign of the cross for eternal life. Through the same Jesus Christ, our Lord, Thy Son, who liveth and reigneth with Thee in the unity of the Holy Ghost, world without end. R. Amen." The above prayer sufficiently explains what the imposition of hands means.

This imposition was formerly looked upon by many theologians as constituting one of the essentials of Confirmation. We say formerly, because after Rome has spoken, we can no longer consider it as an essential part of Confirmation.

2nd, The above prayer whereby the Bishop invokes and beseeches God to send down His Holy Ghost upon the people, is not of absolute necessity. Holy Scripture mentions expressly as ceremonies in conferring this Sacrament, prayer and imposition of hands. We have had occasion to explain that the essential matter in the administration of the Sacrament consists in the imposition of hands along with the anointing. This, like many articles of our holy faith, is not expressly found in Holy Scripture, but we know that the Holy Book does not contain all that Jesus did or said. Therefore we must be guided in this, as in other points, by Tradition and the infallible authority of the Church. No one has ever proved or can prove that any of the essentials in the administration of the Sacraments, has not come down to us from Apostolic times.

3rd, The anointing. Different ceremonies are connected with this: 1st, the anointing itself; 2nd, on the forehead, 3rd, with holy chrism; 4th, in the form of a cross. The anointing itself with holy chrism is considered by all to be of absolute necessity. That this anointing must be on the forehead and in the form of a cross is not considered by all to be of the same necessity, while all admit that a Bishop would commit a mortal sin by administering it in any other way.

169. *Q. What is holy Chrism?*

A. Holy Chrism is a mixture of olive oil and balm consecrated by the bishop.

The anointing constitutes, as we have seen, one of the essential parts of Confirmation. The oil used in Confirmation is called Chrism. Three sorts of oil are blessed by the Bishop on Holy Thursday, viz: the oil of the Catechumens,

called also holy oil; holy Chrism and the oil of the sick. The first is used for Baptism. Chrism is used for Baptism, Confirmation and Holy Orders. The last for the Sacrament of Extreme Unction. Chrism in Baptism is not of the essence of the Sacrament, in Confirmation it is. Theologians discuss the question whether olive oil without the balm would do, that is, whether the balm is a necessary part of the matter. Opinions differ. The Church commands that oil mixed with balm shall be used, without however definitively settling the question, whether balm is absolutely necessary. The Council of Florence declares that the matter of this Sacrament is oil and balm. Another question argued by theologians is whether the oil must absolutely be blessed or consecrated by the Bishop. The ritual requires that it should be so, although there can be no doubt but that the Pope could commission a simple priest to bless it, considering that he can give the power to a simple priest to give Confirmation. He who can give more, can give less. It is customary, however, that whenever this faculty is granted, it is on condition that the priest shall use oil consecrated by the Bishop. The ritual orders besides that the Chrism used shall be the Chrism consecrated that year.

The question now is why did Christ select Chrism, or oil and balm, to be the matter of this Sacrament. As the washing in Baptism indicates the interior cleansing of the soul, so are the properties of oil and balm the symbols of the wonderful effects produced by Confirmation in souls well disposed.

1st, Oil has the property to spread, to penetrate; it signifies in Confirmation that the Holy Ghost penetrates into the soul and spreads in it the fulness of His gifts.

2nd, Oil has the property to soften and to strengthen, that is why the athletes of old anointed their bodies to render them more flexible and stronger; in Confirmation it means that the Holy Ghost by His graces lightens the burdens imposed by the law of God and gives the necessary courage to overcome the enemies of salvation.

3rd, Oil, when burnt, has the property to give light; in Confirmation it signifies that the Holy Ghost coming in us enlightens us in the midst of the darkness of this world, and enkindles our hearts with the flames of His love. Balm spreads a pleasant odor; it signifies in Confirmation that the Christian must spread everywhere the good odor of Christ

by his virtues and good works. To the sweetness of its odor balm joins the property of preserving from corruption; so must Confirmation preserve our souls from the corruption of sin, and prevent them from being contaminated with the false maxims of the world.

170. *Q. What does the Bishop say in anointing the person he confirms?*

A. In anointing the person he confirms the Bishop says: "I sign thee with the sign of the cross, and I confirm thee with the Chrism of salvation, in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost."

The above words constitute with the anointing the essential points of the Sacrament of Confirmation; they are its form. It cannot be doubted, but that this is a most proper form, as it expresses the principal cause in Confirmation, which is the Blessed Trinity; the ministerial cause, viz: the one who pronounces the words, and the effect of the Sacrament, that is, the making of a soldier of Christ by signing him with the sign of the cross, and the strengthening him by confirming him with the Chrism of salvation. The ancients did not use exactly the same words, but such as always conveyed the same meaning; and this is sufficient, because the efficacy of the sacramental form consists in the meaning, not in the sound or the number of words, as otherwise words uttered in other languages besides that of the Church, would be inefficacious. The Greek Church does not use exactly the same words as the Roman, but they convey exactly the same meaning. The essential parts of the Sacraments must have been at all times invariably the same, but there may have been changes in regard to the non-essential. It may not be out of place here to explain, what is of divine institution and what is not. It is an article of faith that Christ has at least in general determined the matter and form of the Sacraments. The Council of Trent declares that the Church has always had the authority to change certain points in regard to the administration of the Sacraments, leaving, of course, their substance intact; we may infer from these words that the Sacraments consist of a *certain,* or specified, matter and form, and that therefore Christ must have determined both, at least in general. It is also certain that Christ has not designated the matter with all its qualities, or the form as consisting of certain words

and no others; He has not determined that the water used for Baptism should be cold, and not warm. There is no proof of such determination. It is further certain that Christ has determined specifically the matter and form for Baptism and the Holy Eucharist, designated water for the first, and bread and wine for the second, with the words: *"I baptize thee, etc."* and *"This is My body;" "This is My blood,"* for the form. For the other Sacraments the question is not so clear. There are a great many things which Jesus did and said, that are not recorded in the Bible. The chief proof must therefore, always be the infallible authority of the teaching Church. Confirmation was administered by the Apostles in essentially the same way as Bishops do now; Tradition shows that the early Christians had received from the Apostles by word of mouth the whole deposit of faith. We are surely safe in doing what the first Christians did, even if the Bible were altogether silent on the subject. The mere fact that the early Fathers speak of anointing for Confirmation, would, in its obvious meaning, show that oil was used, whilst the end for which Christ instituted Confirmation suggests in itself the correctness of the words used. The arguments in favor of this and all other points denied by Protestants are such, that they cannot be overthrown by the vain inventions of men, after a lapse of so many centuries, because the Church is the pillar of truth, always the same in its doctrine; no surer guide can be formed, for the Spirit of truth abides with it forever,

171. *Q. What is meant by anointing the forehead with Chrism in the form of a cross?*

A. By anointing the forehead with Chrism in the form of a cross is meant that the Christian who is confirmed must openly profess and practise his faith, never be ashamed of it, and rather die than deny it.

There is hardly a prescription in the whole Catholic Ritual which is not intended to convey a special meaning. In a few instances certain ceremonies may have been introduced only for the convenience of the priest or the faithful; but as a rule the ceremonies have a strictly religious signification. This is especially true with regard to the administration of the Sacraments. In Confirmation the bishop anoints the forehead with Chrism in the form of a cross. Why the forehead and no other part of the body? The Catechism

gives the reason of it, which agrees with the explanation given of that ceremony by the Fathers of the Council of Florence. The person to be confirmed, they say, is anointed on the forehead, which is the seat of shame, that he never may be ashamed to confess the name of Christ. Never to deny it, however, would not be sufficient for a soldier of Christ, who must be prepared openly to profess it, and rather die than to deny it. There is no possible circumstance in which a Christian would be justified in denying the name of his divine Master. This does not mean, however, that he is always obliged to seek opportunities for such profession. Christ told his Apostles that, when they would be persecuted in one city, they should flee into another. This advice was followed by thousands of the early Christians, who hid themselves in the Catacombs and elsewhere, against the fury of their persecutors. They did not thereby deny the name of Christ. But if we were placed in the alternative of either denying Christ or losing all that is dear to us on earth, and suffering even death, we must be ready to lose all and even to die. All temporal losses and sufferings are a mere nothing compared with the loss of God's friendship, and with the eternal fire of hell. Denying the name of God is a mortal sin, and as such the worst of all evils, to which even death must be preferred. In the present day, when no opportunities may offer to gain, by a public profession of our faith, a martyr's crown, we must especially guard against false shame, of which the forehead is the seat. A denial now by words or actions is all the more criminal, as there are now less temporal evil consequences to be feared from professing our faith. Confirmation is chiefly intended to give us spiritual strength in the profession of practical Christianity and to preserve us from false shame; wherefore the forehead is rightly anointed.

This anointing is done in the form of a cross, that, as the Council of Florence says, "we may never be ashamed of Christ's cross, which is a stumbling-block unto the Jews and foolishness unto the Gentiles." Many a point of Catholic doctrine and practice is highly approved of even by the world; but there are many others which, as by the Gentiles and Jews of old, are stumbling-blocks and looked upon as foolishness. In these points especially the Christian must show his practical Christianity, for never should he be ashamed of the cross of Christ. There is still another

reason why this anointing is made in the form of a cross; it is because the Sacraments draw their efficacy from the cross of Jesus Christ.

172. *Q. Why does the Bishop give the person he confirms a slight blow on the cheek?*

A. The Bishop gives the person he confirms a slight blow on the cheek, to put him in mind, that he must be ready to suffer even death for the sake of Christ.

The purpose of Confirmation is to make us strong Christians and soldiers of Christ. The ceremonies connected with the administration of this Sacrament tend to impress deeply upon us the predominant effect of Confirmation, spiritual fortitude. Fortitude is one of the cardinal virtues. Theologians define it as follows: "Fortitude is one of the moral virtues which moderates the passions of the soul and the actions following therefrom in repelling and sustaining for God painful or difficult things, as for instance, the danger of death. The real strength, which Confirmation is intended to give us, consists, therefore, chiefly in suffering for Christ's sake; the more we have to suffer, the more strength we need. Such was the strength of the martyrs. Christ explained to the disciples of Emmaus, how He had to suffer and to enter into His glory, and He wills that His disciples should do the same. That is why He allows us to be tempted, and permits this present life to be for us a vale of tears. The soldiers of Christ must overcome all obstacles in the way to heaven, and he will do so by being strong in suffering. To impress this forcibly on his mind, in addition to being anointed in the form of the cross, and to show that the cross should not be to him what it was to the Jews and the Gentiles, the Bishop gives him a slight blow on the cheek. Whilst doing so, the Bishop says: "Peace be to you," as if to say: "You may be buffeted for the name of Christ, but remember that your fortitude in suffering will bring you true peace." Suffering is the lot of all those who desire to lead a pious life, their readiness to suffer even death for the sake of Christ, will make them His true disciples. We see this effect of Confirmation illustrated in the lives of the Apostles, who were most cowardly before they had received the Holy Ghost, and who afterwards went rejoicing from the tribunals of their enemies, because they had been found worthy to suffer for the name of Jesus. This

little ceremony is, therefore, very appropriate. The philosophers of old, used to say: "If thou wishest for peace, prepare for war." The soldier of the cross must secure peace by his readiness for spiritual warfare. Confirmation was not meant to make physical giants of us, but, when received with due dispositions, it will make spiritual heroes of us. The ceremony of giving a slight blow on the cheek is not of recent origin. Commentaries on the Roman Pontifical show that it is found in a manuscript Pontifical dating from the fifth century. Who could prove that it was not introduced by the Apostles themselves, to express one of the chief effects of Confirmation?

173. *Q. To receive Confirmation worthily is it necessary to be in the state of grace?*

A. To receive Confirmation worthily it is necessary to be in the state of grace.

The question proposed is not whether the state of grace is necessary to receive Confirmation validly, but worthily. For the valid reception not much is required. For children it is sufficient that they be baptized; in the adults, besides Baptism, and at least implicit habitual intention is required. In regard to the Confirmation of children the Catechism of the Council of Trent says: "It is to be observed that although the Sacrament of Confirmation may be administered to all after Baptism, it is not expedient, however, before the children have attained the use of their reason." If therefore it is not considered desirable to wait to the twelfth year, it should be deferred at least to the seventh. Confirmation was not instituted as being necessary to salvation, but in order that we may be found endowed with and prepared by its strength, when we have to fight or suffer for the faith of Christ. Nobody will declare children, who have not attained the use of reason, fit for this kind of fight. For adults some sort of intention is required to receive Confirmation validly; there must be the will to receive it. For its worthy reception, the state of grace is necessary, as mortal sin would prevent the reception of an increase of sanctifying grace and cause the recipient to commit a horrible sacrilege. The state of grace must be pre-acquired at least by an act of perfect contrition. Confession is not commanded, but only recommended even to those who are in the state of mortal sin, provided, however, they elicit an act of *perfect*

contrition. This assertion appears justified from the following words of the Roman Pontifical: "Adults must first confess their sins and then be confirmed, or at least be contrite for their mortal sins, if they have fallen into any." Besides, as St. Thomas teaches, if an adult is in mortal sin, without being conscious of it, and even receives Confirmation without being perfectly contrite, provided it be not mere fiction, but sincerely believes he has perfect contrition, although he has not, he would, nevertheless, obtain the remission of his sins through the grace conferred in this Sacrament. The reason of this is, that the receiver puts no obstacle to grace, and also because in the religious reception of this Sacrament is included a certain conversion to God and a virtual attrition. As a rule, however, confession precedes the reception of all the Sacraments of the living.

174. *Q. What special preparation should be made to receive Confirmation?*

A. Persons of an age to learn should know the chief mysteries of faith and the duties of a Christian, and be instructed in the nature and effects of this Sacrament.

We have seen before that, although Confirmation may be validly administered to children, who have not yet attained the use of reason, the Church deems it preferable that its administration should be deferred at least to the seventh year. Certain conditions are, indeed, required in an adult, not only for its lawful, but also for its valid administration. A person could not be validly confirmed, who does not by an act of his free will consent to being confirmed. For a lawful and fruitful reception more is demanded. He must be in the state of grace, as otherwise far from receiving any graces, he would commit a horrible sacrilege. We read in an instruction of the Sacred Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith, dated May 4th, 1774, that those to be confirmed must first be carefully instructed as to the nature, dignity, effects and dispositions required to receive it worthily. It is further necessary that they be instructed in the principal mysteries of faith, the precepts of the decalogue and of the Church; they must know the acts of faith, hope and charity, the Lord's prayer and the Symbol of the Apostles. To will, we must know what we will; it is, therefore, impossible to desire that great favor, except we know the nature and effects of it. That is why a long and careful

preparation precedes the reception of this Sacrament, in order that knowledge may create an eager desire to receive it. Formerly fasting was required on the part of the recipient and also of the Bishop; but, as St. Thomas says, considering the numbers to be confirmed, it would be very inconvenient to the Bishops if the time for confirmation was limited to the morning hours. In the Instruction of the Sacred Congregation above quoted, it is also said: "According to an ancient practice of the Church, those to be confirmed ought to be fasting;" it is therefore, desirable, but not prescribed.

175. *Q. Is it a sin to neglect Confirmation?*

A. It is a sin to neglect Confirmation, especially in these evil days when faith and morals are exposed to so many and such violent temptations.

Confirmation is not like Baptism of absolute necessity; children dying after Baptism before they attain the use of reason without being confirmed are certainly saved. But if there is a precept commanding adults to be confirmed, they certainly commit a sin, if they neglect it. Whether this sin is mortal or venial, depends upon the nature of the command. Is it necessary to receive Confirmation? Theologians are not unanimous on this question. Some affirm and teach that there is an obligation, binding under pain of mortal sin to receive Confirmation some time during life. Others claim that there is no divine or ecclesiastical command obliging in itself at present to receive this Sacrament, and the reason they give for it is, that Confirmation is instituted to make us better, to strengthen our faith and increase sanctifying grace, all which ends may be obtained also by other means; for instance, by frequent Communion, by prayer, etc. They add, however, that indirectly there might be a serious obligation to receive it, on account of danger to salvation, contempt, scandal or other such circumstances, as, for instance, in the following cases: 1st, If on account of neglecting it, one would believe himself to be in serious danger of losing faith or charity; 2nd, If one should give scandal by neglecting to receive it, thus showing contempt for it, or as if not believing it to be a Sacrament; 3rd, If one neglects it out of formal contempt, because he makes light of it. All, however, agree that those who could easily have the opportunity of being confirmed and neglect it, commit a

venial sin, because it is a voluntary waste of spiritual favors. Pope Benedict XIV in a Bull about the rites and dogmas of the Greeks, speaking of those who had not been lawfully confirmed, says: "They must be warned by the Ordinaries, that they are guilty of mortal sin, if when they can be confirmed, they refuse and neglect to receive that Sacrament." By these words that great Pope did not intend to settle the controversy between theologians; his words apply only to those for whom they were intended, viz: to those who had been invalidly confirmed by Italo-Greek priests, and who refused to be confirmed again, because they held their first Confirmation for valid. In an Instruction edited by order of the Sacred Congregation of the Propaganda (May 4, 1774) and approved by Pope Clement XIV, missionary priests are warned to teach the people that, although Confirmation is not a necessary means to salvation, yet it cannot be neglected without mortal sin, when an opportune occasion offers to receive it. The Instruction adds that, if this be true for all the faithful, it is much more so for those who live among pagans and heretics, because the dangers for them are greater. Although this Instruction does not, according to the best authorities, set at rest the controversy of theologians, yet it shows that the greater the danger to faith and morals, the greater also is the obligation of receiving it. The answer of the Catechism to the question proposed is, therefore, quite correct. It is in any case a venial sin to neglect Confirmation; and since the present are evil days, and faith and morals are exposed to so many and violent temptations, one would show himself exceedingly careless of his eternal salvation, if he neglected to receive Confirmation, because all the strength of a good Christian is required in these evil days to resist temptation and fight the battles of Christ.

LESSON SIXTEENTH

ON THE GIFTS AND FRUITS OF THE HOLY GHOST

176. *Q. Which are the effects of Confirmation?*
A. The effects of Confirmation are an increase of sanctifying grace, the strengthening of our faith, and the gifts of the Holy Ghost.

When treating of the Sacraments in general, we said with the Catechism that they were instituted by Christ for the purpose of giving grace to the soul; they are the channels by which the fruits of Christ's Redemption are applied to the soul. Confirmation, being a Sacrament of the living, gives an increase of sanctifying grace and makes the soul more pleasing in the sight of God. Besides this effect, which is common to all the Sacraments of the living, Confirmation also gives its special sacramental grace. This grace is the strengthening of our faith and the gifts of the Holy Ghost. Baptism made us children of God; Confirmation makes us soldiers of Christ. When God calls a man to a particular dignity or office, He gives him also the graces required for the faithful discharge of the obligations it imposes. As soldiers of Christ, we must face His enemies and ours, and face them with the weapons He has provided. St. Peter in his first Epistle (5:8, 9) tells us how we are to fight our adversary, the devil, "who goeth about, as a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour. Whom resist ye," says the Apostle, "strong in the faith." Our strength in the faith is the shield against the fiery darts of the evil one, the pledge of victory. Our life on earth is said to be a spiritual warfare; it is not of a transitory nature, it will go on as long as we live. To enable us to be victorious, Christ has instituted a Sacrament, the effects of which will last as long as the warfare. Confirmation strengthens our faith, not for a time only, but for the whole term of our earthly pilgrimage. The Apostles are examples of the efficacy of Confirmation; compare them before and after they had received the Holy Ghost. Like the people of Samaria, we receive the Holy

Ghost in an invisible manner by this Sacrament. We had already received Him in Baptism; by it we became His temples. Through the Holy Ghost we were justified and made children of God, to be heirs with Christ. In Confirmation, the Holy Ghost gives Himself to us with a greater fulness of His graces and brings to our souls special gifts. The special favors we receive are called the seven gifts of the Holy Ghost. In addition to the foregoing effects, Confirmation imprints also a permanent character in our soul, which prevents it from ever being reiterated. This spiritual mark will accompany us to the other world, either to our greater glory in heaven, or to our utter shame in hell.

177. *Q. Which are the gifts of the Holy Ghost?*

A. The gifts of the Holy Ghost are Wisdom, Understanding, Counsel, Fortitude, Knowledge, Piety and Fear of the Lord.

The gifts of the Holy Ghost are here given in the same order as in Isaiah (11:3). The prophet in this chapter speaks of Christ and His kingdom. He tells us that the Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon Him. He had said in a preceding chapter (9:6) that His name "Shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, God the Mighty, the Father of the world to come, the Prince of peace." He now assigns to Him the sevenfold gifts of the Holy Ghost, necessary to that exalted state. He was to be, as foretold, possessed of those gifts; because of the Spirit of counsel, He was to be the Counsellor; because of the Spirit of fortitude, He was to be the Mighty; because of the Spirit of Wisdom, He was to be the Prince of Peace; because of the Spirit of Piety, He was to be the Father of the world to come, etc. The Protestant leaders, not believing in Confirmation as the means whereby these gifts are conveyed to the soul, tried to explain away the above words of Isaiah. The Holy Fathers, however, have always called them the seven gifts of the Holy Ghost. Isaiah by Spirit does not mean the substance of the Holy Ghost, but His gifts; seven gifts are especially given to express the fulness of the gifts of the Holy Ghost, which were to rest on Christ. Now a disciple of Christ, a Christian is intended to be another Christ, and that name is given him by the early Fathers. He is called upon to follow in the footsteps of Christ; in this high call-

ing, he needs the gifts of the Holy Ghost. Theologians argue the question, whether these gifts are the same as the virtues bearing the same name. St. Thomas teaches that the infused virtues are given to man, that he may direct himself according to the supernatural law of faith, hope and charity, etc; the gifts are given him that he may direct himself according to a stronger impulse and inspiration of the Holy Ghost, by whom he is led in a divine manner and above the common law to acts of faith, hope, charity, etc. They are called gifts, so continues St. Thomas, because with them man is so disposed, that he may at once yield to a divine inspiration according to the words of Isaiah: "The Lord God hath opened my ear, and I do not resist, I have not gone back" (Is. 4:5). According to others, there is, generally speaking, between the virtues and the gifts, this difference; they are virtues because they perfect the soul; they are gifts of the Holy Ghost, because they are given by Him. For extraordinary occurrences they are rather gifts than virtues. Certain of these gifts correspond with the moral virtues, and these are to a certain extent given to every man through justification; they accompany sanctifying grace, and are therefore infused in Baptism, and perfected in Confirmation. The gifts of understanding, and partly the gifts of wisdom and knowledge, are not moral virtues, and therefore are not given to every one through justification; they are, as a rule, only infused in Confirmation. Theologians also argue the question whether Isaiah in enumerating these seven gifts, begins from the lowest to the highest, or *vice versa;* though they differ, they all are right. These gifts, as it were, form a circle in which every ray may be first or last. How do we come to wisdom? From understanding. How to understanding? From counsel. How to counsel? From fortitude. How to fortitude? From knowledge. How to knowledge? From piety. How to piety? From fear of the Lord. We may then begin with the last mentioned, and preface it to wisdom; because the fear of the Lord is really the beginning of true wisdom. To make us perfect Christians Confirmation bestows upon us the seven gifts of the Holy Ghost. The more perfect the dispositions of the recipients, the more abundantly also will the Holy Ghost pour His gifts into their souls.

178. *Q. Why do we receive the gift of Fear of the Lord?*

A. We receive the gift of Fear of the Lord to fill us with a dread of sin.

The gifts of the Holy Ghost are like the talents of the Gospel, of which a strict account shall be demanded. They are given us for a purpose; not to coöperate with them is to frustrate the gifts of God. The gift of fear of the Lord is given to fill us with a dread of sin. Sin is next to its punishment the worst calamity, which could befall us. It would appear quite natural for us to dread it, and yet most of mortals make light of it. The majority of men dread the temporal punishments inflicted by the civil power for certain crimes, but the few dread it for itself, in as much as it is an offense of God. If we look upon life as the greatest natural blessing, anything to preserve it in a most serious danger would be appreciated as a most costly gift. The loss of the spiritual life through sin is the worst calamity, and anything that will avert it, should be looked upon as a most precious gift. This gift is the fear of the Lord. Scripture very explicitly tells us so in numerous places. "By the fear of the Lord one declineth from evil," we read in the Proverbs (15:27); and again: "By the fear of the Lord men depart from evil" (16:6). The fear of the Lord is held up to us as an infallible remedy against sin; every one avoids evil or sin, if he fears the Lord. The motives of this fear are suggested to us by faith. Faith teaches us that our lives are in the hands of God, that He can call us out of this life at any time He pleases, that by sin we become His enemies, and that after the first mortal sin we may commit, we may justly be treated like the fallen angels and be cast into hell without a moment for repentance. He who thus fears God, will not be likely to commit a mortal sin. We sin, because we do not fear God. The numerous instances of divine mercy tend to dispel from the minds of some the thoughts of God's terrible judgments. Sin is the only thing we need dread. Imbued with the fear of the Lord, we shall dread no other enemies.

179. *Q. Why do we receive the gift of Piety?*

A. We receive the gift of Piety to make us love God as a Father and obey Him because we love Him.

The fear of the Lord and piety are very closely connected. In the Hebrew text of Isaiah the same word is used to express both. Certain heretics have taken occasion from it to assert that there are six gifts only, not seven. The best interpreters, however, show that the word used has two meanings; first, it signifies fear and reverence, and secondly, piety, which naturally follows reverence. The word *piety* is not always used in Holy Scripture to convey the same meaning. When referring to one of the gifts mentioned by Isaiah, it is generally understood to mean worship and true love of God, and an effort of interior devotion inducing us to hope in and fear Him. The connection between fear of God and piety is so close, that the Seventy Interpreters often translate the one by the other. Piety may refer either to God or to those by whom, next to God, we exist and are governed, such as our parents, our country. When it refers to God, it means properly the virtue of religion. We have said before, that some of the gifts do not really differ from the moral virtues of the same name. Piety, then, as a gift and as an infused virtue, induces the will to give to God the honor due to Him. The highest honor we can give Him is love, and to show that this love, to be perfect, may not be selfish, the Catechism adds that the gift of piety is bestowed to make us love God as a Father. Piety means not only a realization of God's excellence, but also our dependence on Him, more as a son on his father. Piety includes honor with submission. A pagan cannot fail to recognize God's excellence, but he refuses to submit to Him, and therefore there is no piety on his part towards God. God cannot be pleased with the honor so given Him; God is eminently our Father; we owe Him infinitely more than to those who share His paternity. Piety then properly means filial love of God. We cannot so love God without a special help of His grace; piety is the permanent gift, whereby we are enabled to love Him as a Father. This love naturally includes obedience to His commands; obedience, as our Saviour often explained, is the proof of love. The nobler the motives of submission, the more intense will love be. To obey merely out of fear of evil consequences, hardly includes a beginning of love. Love must be the pattern of obedience; we must obey Him because we love him. "If you love Me, keep My commandments," (John 14:15). This is the rational way of obeying Him. For this, however, the grace

of God is needed; the gift of piety abiding in us is to bring about those happy results.

180. *Q. Why do we receive the gift of Knowledge?*
A. We receive the gift of Knowledge to enable us to discover the will of God in all things.

The reason of man's existence is on the part of God the manifestation of His glory; the purpose of man's existence on his part, is the attaining of that end. All his acts must tend to that; God's glory must be the motive of them all. We must further that glory according to the faculties or talents given us. "The Heavens show forth the glory of God," says the Royal Prophet (Ps. 18:1), "and the firmament declareth the work of His hands." The whole irrational creation proclaims in its way the glory of God; man alone can and must glorify Him in a rational way. To act rationally, we must act for a reason. Which is that reason? The Latin word here rendered by knowledge signifies science, which in philosophy means, the knowledge of a thing by its cause. To know then whether my every action tends to God's glory or not, I have but to consult the cause or reason of my actions. If I am guided by the will of God, I am promoting His glory; if I am not, I am working against Him. The will of God should, then, be the reason of all my actions. God does not indicate to us His will in a sensible manner at all times. He has explained to us, true enough, in Holy Scripture, what He wills us to do; but His words may not be clear enough to us; they may not always cover all the circumstances of our case. A light greater than our natural light is required to discover the will of God in all things. His grace is necessary. When St. Paul on his way to Damascus was precipitated to the ground, the voice he heard was sufficient to show him that God had brought his nefarious work to a stop; but it was not equally clear what God intended him to do. Hence trembling and astonished, he said: "Lord, what will Thou have me to do?"(Acts 9). He was sent to Ananias, from whom he was to learn the will of God. We may often be perplexed in questions of the most serious import as to the will of God. God has selected for us a state of life wherein we should serve Him; no angel is sent us to tell which state it is; and yet it is most important for us to know. To discover the will of God in all things requires a

special help, a lasting light abiding with us during the period of our mortal lives. This help is that light we call the gift of knowledge.

181. *Q. Why do we receive the gift of Fortitude?*

A. We receive the gift of Fortitude to strengthen us to do the will of God in all things.

To know the will of God and not do it, will not justify us. Acting against the will of God is properly the nature of sin. It might, at first sight, seem that no special strength is needed, as God does not command us impossible things. Theologians, however, teach us that it is morally impossible, without a special help of God, for us to keep all His commandments. Reaching heaven by keeping the commandments is like climbing a house; both are morally impossible without a help; with the aid of a ladder, it is easy to climb a house; in like manner it is easy with the grace of God to obtain heaven. "As I knew that I could not otherwise be continent," says the wise man, "except God gave it, and this also was a point of wisdom to know, whose gift it was, I went to the Lord and besought Him" (Wisd. 8:21). Continence is commanded, yet Scripture clearly tells us that it is a gift of God to be obtained by prayer. He who will not have the gift, cannot have the virtue. This moral impossibility to keep the commandments arises partly from the nature of certain commandments, partly from our excessive weakness in spiritual matters. God makes it possible for us to do all that He demands of us, by imparting to us His grace and gifts. The gift of fortitude is intended to be a permanent strength given us to do God's will in all things.

182. *Q. Why do we receive the gift of Counsel?*

A. We receive the gift of Counsel to warn us of the deceits of the devil and of the dangers to salvation.

Some catechisms call this by way of explanation the gift of Counsel or of Prudence, and the purpose for which this gift is given us, as explained by the Catechism, sufficiently shows that Counsel is a part of Prudence. Theologians tell us that prudence supposes three different acts, viz: 1st, to inquire after the means, 2nd, to judge of the means suggested, 3rd, to apply these means, or in other words, prudence demands good counsel, good judgment, followed by

action. Christ commands us (Mat. 10:16) to be prudent as serpents and simple as doves. Tobias advised his son (4:19) always to seek counsel of a wise man. The necessity of counsel cannot be overestimated, because in matters spiritual the devil is so cunning, and the dangers of salvation are so numerous. The need of counsel must have been felt already in the earthly Paradise. The devil presented his case to Eve so cunningly, that she was not even aware that her mortal enemy, the devil, was talking to her. Our Saviour permitted Himself to be tempted by Satan, and allowed him so to argue, in order to convince us that we must always be on our guard against him. Most of the great crimes in the history of the world have been perpetrated under pretext of some good. Witness the history of all heresies, and even the murder of the God-Man. The fall of man is always brought about by deceit. The first step in the wrong direction was a misrepresentation; never will the devil present us sin in all its hideousness and malice. The souls he has succeeded in deceiving are beyond computation. The mere fact of so many persons, naturally perhaps more gifted then we are, having been led astray by his deceits, must be of itself sufficient to make us appreciate the gift of counsel bestowed on us in Confirmation. Besides the deceits of the devil there are so many other dangers to which our salvation is exposed. The devil is not our only enemy, the flesh and the world are just as eloquent in deceiving us. From morning till night we experience in us that continual warfare between body and soul; the voice of the body does not speak for our eternal interests, and yet how many are guided by it, and do its bidding! The world with its false maxims proves too eloquent and catching for the majority of mankind. We receive in Confirmation the gift of counsel to warn us of all these deceits. It abides with us to direct us at all times; the warning, however, will not be persuasive enough, unless we accustom ourselves to listen to its voice.

183. *Q. Why do we receive the gift of Understanding?*

A. We receive the gift of Understanding to enable us to know more clearly the mysteries of faith.

Understanding may be considered as a natural, or as a supernatural gift. As a natural gift, it belongs to human

nature; intelligence and free will is the specific difference between man and irrational beings. In consequence of the sin of our first parents, the intelligence of man is not what it was before the fall. It cannot now acquire knowledge of as many things and as easily as it could before. Man's intelligence, moreover, is limited; though capable of continual progress, it will never know all the things it is capable of knowing. In acquiring knowledge, it finds many difficulties and comes across many mysteries. Many a thing we see, the why and wherefore of which is hidden from us; these are mysteries of nature. But there is another order of things, which surpass our understanding altogether, the very existence of which we cannot know without a light from above; these are mysteries of faith. We may have a more or less clear idea of a mystery, without, however, being able fully to comprehend it. There may be mysteries which may not necessarily have any influence on our actions; but there are others which demand our attention every day of our lives. These last must influence our daily actions. God's Providence, for instance, in all its details is a wonderful mystery to us; it gives us the key to many occurrences to which we could otherwise assign no reason. We may, indeed, have a more or less clear idea of it; but a special grace is needed so to penetrate us with its reality, to enable us to accept all as coming from the hand of our Father, who is in heaven. The gift of understanding perfects our natural understanding, that we may know more thoroughly and be more deeply imbued with the mysteries of our faith.

184. *Q. Why do we receive the gift of Wisdom?*

A. We receive the gift of Wisdom to give us a relish for the things of God, and to direct our whole life and all our actions to His honor and glory.

Wisdom is defined by philosophers: "The knowledge of a thing by its supreme and highest cause." The supreme and highest cause of all that is good is God; every good gift comes from the Father of lights. Everything done for Him has an eternal reward. The things of God are infinitely superior to the things of the world. To relish them, we must look upon them in this light. Nothing is small in the service of God. The reward promised to the most insignificant action done for God exceeds all that the world can give to its servants for the greatest exploits. The Apostles went

their way rejoicing, when they were found worthy to suffer for the name of Jesus. Calvary, like Thabor, should cause us joy, since we know that God is the author of both. The Apostles bid us to perform all we do for the honor of God. A good intention should sanctify all our actions, and wisdom should suggest the motive. God has a strict right over us, He is our Master, all we are, and all we have are His; if we wish to be wise, we should refer all to Him. Christ says that, when we fast, we should not appear to men as fasting; acts of mortification inspire no reluctance to those who are guided by the spirit of wisdom.

185. *Q. Which are the Beatitudes?*

A. The Beatitudes are:

1. "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."

2. "Blessed are the meek, for they shall possess the land."

3. "Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted."

4. "Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after justice, for they shall be filled."

5. "Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy."

6. "Blessed are the clean of heart, for they shall see God."

7. "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the children of God."

8. "Blessed are they that suffer persecution for justice' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."

The Beatitudes are prefaced in the Gospel of St. Matthew by the following words: "Seeing the multitudes, He went up into a mountain and when He was sat down, His disciples came unto Him and opening His mouth He taught them saying (Mat. 5:1):

I. "Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." By these words Jesus declares those blessed, who, being detached from the things of the world, are magnanimous enough to despise them, if they possess them, or not to desire them, if they are deprived of them. The kingdom of heaven is their right, their assured property.

Never does a soul yearn more for heavenly goods than when it is disengaged from all material attachment. To despise the earth is to purchase heaven.

II. "Blessed are the meek, for they shall possess the land." Meekness, that flower of charity, whose perfume restrains all uncharitable feeling, has the promise of ruling the world. Violence is not durable; it is condemned to consume itself, and it cannot but exasperate and provoke our neighbor. Those who use it, create only bitter feelings and resentment. Meekness which is really a power, a restraining power, is always equal to itself and beneficent. Its influence is all the greater, as it directly moves or appeals to the hearts. When victorious, it dissimulates its triumph under the unequivocal testimony of the most tender kindness. He who has acquired or won it after many a hard struggle, may consider himself blessed. Great is its influence in the world; but greater still is its merit before God. The assured reward of the meek is especially the promise of the heavenly kingdom.

III. "Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted." Tears, however bitter, are for the disciples of Christ, a blessing, a happiness. If caused by deception, they may be compared to a veil falling from our eyes and making us view life in its sorrowful reality. If by grief, they become a sacrament which cleanses the soul. If by love, they are a cry doing violence to heaven itself. God gives Himself to the loving heart calling on Him. The coming of the Messiah is the best proof of this. He comes to tell those who love God: "I am the proof of God's love in your regard." To those who are sorry for their sins: "They are forgiven you." To those who weep over their folly: "Henceforth I shall be your light;" and they are all abundantly comforted.

IV. "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst after justice, for they shall be filled." The distinctive sign of great souls is the ardent desire of justice. It creates in them a yearning as intense as corporal hunger and thirst in those who are famished. This is quite natural; justice is the true, the beautiful and the good for which our souls are created. Our souls demand that divine food, just as our bodies require food and drink. Unfortunately most men stifle this natural longing of the soul. The man, however, who seeks God and His justice, enjoys real happiness, for

he shall obtain both, and possess them to his heart's content.

V. "Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy." To do good is to merit it at the hands of others. The human heart almost naturally inclines to sympathize and relieve all who suffer and to suppress suffering. If we turn such a feeling into a virtue, it is impossible that God, before whom we are at all times only poor mendicants, should turn away from us, for He will most assuredly relieve us of our sins and grant our requests. Nothing more forcibly appeals to the heart of Our Father in heaven than the charity we show towards our brethren on earth. His mercy infinitely repays ours.

VI. "Blessed are the clean of heart, for they shall see God." Spiritual vision is impaired, if the soul is not pure. The slightest spot on the bodily eye prevents it from clearly perceiving objects; if it be the whole eye that is affected therewith, it can perceive nothing. Whatever may be the cause of the soul's defilement, be it impurity, injustice, or any other vice, it causes spiritual blindness. In such a state the soul sees no more and believes no longer, and pretends even that faith is impossible. The heart which is not defiled or which sorrow has purified, finds the practice of faith easy and almost natural. Every thing then speaks to it of God, and invites it to a closer union with Him. In creatures it beholds the works of God, and in men His image. However consoling this beholding of God may be on earth, yet it is only as St. Paul says, "through a glass in a dark manner," (1 Cor. 13: 12); the soul's vision will be perfected in heaven, where "we shall see Him face to face."

VII. "Blessed are the peace-makers, for they shall be called the children of God." The heavenly Father enjoys, in His divine essence, a peace which nothing can disturb, and which He communicates for the good of His creatures. His true children are those who cannot be disturbed by any thing earthly, because they are at peace with themselves, and the testimony of their conscience places them above all the turmoils of life. That calm serenity of their life creates around them a sweet and peaceful atmosphere, which charms and transforms those who approach them. Having peace with themselves the children of God communicate it to others.

VIII. "Blessed are they that suffer persecution for justice' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are

ye when they shall revile you, and persecute you and speak all that is evil against you, untruly, for My sake. Be glad and rejoice, for your reward is very great in heaven." The Apostles and the martyrs and all those who have been deemed worthy to suffer for Christ's sake, are abundant proofs of this blessing. Their very sufferings seem to increase their happiness.

The above constitutes the different classes of men to whom real happiness is promised. They are the history of the elect.

186. *Q. Which are the twelve fruits of the Holy Ghost?*

A. The twelve fruits of the Holy Ghost are Charity, Joy, Peace, Patience, Benignity, Goodness, Long-Suffering, Mildness, Faith, Modesty, Continency and Chastity.

These fruits of the Holy Ghost are given by St. Paul in his letter to the Galatians (5:22, 22). St. Paul opposes to the works of the flesh, that is, of concupiscence, the work or the fruits of the Spirit, works, namely, quickened by the spirit of grace, fruits which the Holy Ghost by His grace produces in us, that by these we may obtain heaven, from which the works of the flesh exclude its slaves. St. Paul does not enumerate all the fruits of the Spirit, because all virtues are fruits of the Spirit, but only those that are most noticeable, and most directly opposed to the works of the flesh, of which he was treating. First, he puts *charity* because it is the first and noblest fruit, the parent of the others; those following are the fruits of charity. *Joy* proceeding from a clear conscience, free from sins and vices. The greatest victory is the victory over our passions. The fruits of the flesh and of concupiscence are sorrow and sadness. To seek joy in sin or vice, is, says St. Chrysostom, like scratching itch; it only makes its subsequent misery worse. *Peace* is ease of mind, unmoved by passions. This peace, "which surpasseth all understanding" (Phil. 4:7), is so great a blessing, that if God had not promised any other reward to virtue, this of itself would be a sufficient inducement to all to practise virtue most arduously. To have peace and to keep it with others, *patience* is needed. Without patience we could not bear the shortcomings of others in our regard, and yet we must, if we will have peace. *Benignity* causes us to be gentle in speaking, answering and

also in doing good. One might be good and beneficent to others, and yet not be benign, if his manner is rude and harsh. Benignity supposes gentle words and manner. The practice of benignity is a great token of holiness, captivating the good will of others (Wisd. 7:22). *Goodness* is the disposition to do good to our neighbor. This is one of the characteristics of the Holy Ghost, and was most conspicuous in Christ. "You know," says St. Peter (Acts 10:38), "Jesus of Nazareth how God anointed Him with the Holy Ghost, and with power, who went about doing good and healing all that were oppressed by the devil, for God was with Him." *Long-suffering* is a part of patience, or is the virtue of patience itself viewed under one aspect, viz.: the tediousness caused by having to wait for the desired object. Hence God is called in Scripture long-suffering when inviting us to penance and awaiting us, and tolerating our delays and our fickleness, which, humanly speaking, would cause tedium. If our sufferings in the service of God were to have their immediate reward, there would be no occasion for growing weary; but as it may be deferred to the other world, long-suffering, as a fruit of the Holy Ghost, enables us to bear up till God sees fit to deliver us. *Mildness* is opposed to anger and animosity, which refuses to suffer anything, will not bear the yoke or put up with the ways or doings of others, but thinks immediately of revenge. The Latin word for mildness means according to St. Anselm, to be accustomed to be led by the hand; to be flexible, tractable. *Faith,* as a fruit of the Holy Ghost, may be the theological virtue of faith, or it may be the same credulity, whereby we with simplicity trust our neighbor and do not even suspect him of falsehood. St. Paul says that "charity believeth all things" (1 Cor. 13:7), that is, "is not suspicious." This faith and candid simplicity is the sign of a candid, dovelike and holy mind, and therefore is the work of the Holy Ghost. *Modesty* is a virtue moderating all our exterior actions, such as, walking, speaking, laughing, etc.; it proceeds from the internal moderation or regulation of our mind and passions. *Continency* is a virtue, whereby we refrain from every thing vicious; and, in particular, it is a virtue disposing our will to resist the evil impulses of concupiscence inducing to impurity. In Holy Scripture continency is expressly called "a gift of God" (Wisd. 8:21). Continency may be called incipient and militant chastity.

Chastity is a virtue which excludes all impure desires and acts; in the married it moderates the use of marriage according to the law of God. Impurity is of all vices the most diametrically opposed to the Spirit of God, for it is the work of the flesh, just as Chastity is the fruit of the Spirit.

LESSON SEVENTEENTH

ON THE SACRAMENT OF PENANCE

187. *Q. What is the Sacrament of Penance?*
A. Penance is a Sacrament in which the sins committed after Baptism are forgiven.

Penance is of all Sacraments the one most misrepresented by non-Catholics. It was the one first eliminated by the so-called Reformers, in order to pave the way for their new and anti-Christian doctrines. Never could Protestantism have gained so strong a foothold, had it not been for the neglect of that powerful means of salvation. Never could so many souls have been shipwrecked, had they held on to this plank of safety. It seems imcomprehensible that Christians still professing to believe in the Bible, could have cast away this divine institution. Many still look upon it as a means to deprave both priest and penitent, although the prevailing wickedness among Christians can easily be traced to its neglect. The aim of the Reformers was to shake off the yoke of the Gospel, and turn liberty into license. The Sacrament of Penance is what its name implies, and that is why it is a stumbling-block to so many.

The Council of Trent speaks as follows: "If all those regenerated by Baptism had been grateful enough towards God to preserve constantly the sanctifying grace they received in Baptism through the special favor of God, it would not have been necessary to institute another Sacrament for the remission of sins. As however God, rich in mercy, knows our weakness, He granted a remedy of life to those who had delivered themselves afterwards to the slavery of sin and the power of the devil, namely, the Sacrament of Penance whereby the merits of Christ's death are applied to those who have fallen after Baptism." In vain do we search the Scripture for some other means of remitting sin committed after Baptism.

Penance etymologically means the action whereby one suffers the punishment due to his sin. Pagan writers have

given it this meaning. From the point of view of theologians Penance may be considered as a virtue or as a Sacrament. Penance, as a virtue, may be a moral virtue inclining the will to sorrow for sin and the purpose of amendment; or it may be more particularly a Christian virtue of the moral order, infused by God and inclining man to repair the injury done to God by sin. Penance as a Sacrament received various names from the Holy Fathers: "Confession, absolution, reconciliation, second Baptism, the second plank after shipwreck." The more modern writers call it the sacred Tribunal, the Tribunal of mercy, the Sacrament of reconciliation.

Christ left to His Church what theologians commonly call the power of the keys, that is, the power to forgive sin, both as to the guilt and the punishment due. In answer to a subsequent question we will prove that such power was given the Church and its ministers. We will now show that the exercise of this power constitutes a Sacrament of the New Law, Penance. The Council of Trent, declared it to be a dogma of faith that Penance is a Sacrament. Penance is a Sacrament, because it has all the essentials of a Sacrament. They are clearly put forth in the words used by Our Lord to convey to His Apostles this extraordinary power: "Receive ye the Holy Ghost. Whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven them; whose sins you shall retain, they are retained" (John 20:23). We have seen before that three things constitute the essentials of a Sacrament, an outward sign, divine institution and the giving of grace. In the following question when examining the matter and form of Penance, we will show wherein this outward sign consists. There can be no doubt as to its divine institution, because the above words are Christ's; they must effect what they mean. Sin is expelled by the return of sanctifying grace in the soul. The words of Christ, besides the essentials of a Sacrament, indicate or insinuate also who is the minister of the Sacrament, and its matter and form. To the Apostles and to their successors only did Christ give that power. The form is implied by the words "whose sins you shall forgive"; they indicate that remission is to be given by a judicial act of the minister; this act must, indeed, be external and expressed by words. The words of Christ also insinuate confession, contrition and satisfaction, as will afterwards be explained.

The Holy Fathers are unanimous in describing Penance as a Sacrament. St. Athanasius says: "As a man baptized by a man and priest, is enlightened by the grace of the Holy Ghost, so he receives, when confessing in Penance, the remission of his sins from the priest through the grace of Christ."

All other arguments failing, prescription alone would be ample evidence to show that Penance is a Sacrament. For fifteen centuries the whole Christian Church believed it. Can we hold that a universal mistake of such importance was possible, if we believe that the Church was endowed with infallibility? If Christ is not the author of this Sacrament, if the Apostles are not its promulgators, would not history record the name of the famous impostor, who had so revolutionized sound Christianity? No attempt has ever been made to discover the presumed author. How easy it is for a Catholic to prove that such imposition never was possible in the Church!

The Catechism says that only the sins committed after Baptism can be forgiven by Penance, for the simple reason, that no other Sacrament can be received before Baptism. Original sin and all actual sins committed before it are forgiven by Baptism. St. Augustine speaking of homicide says: "If it was committed by a catechumen, it is washed away by Baptism; if committed by one who is baptized, it is cured by Penance and reconciliation. No exception is made of any sin; all sins can be forgiven; although some sins place us in such a predicament as to make its remission almost impossible."

188. *Q. How does the Sacrament of Penance remit sin and restore to the soul the friendship of God?*

A. The Sacrament of Penance remits sin and restores the friendship of God to the soul by means of the Absolution of the priest.

This answer of the Catechism leads us to say a word in regard to a much vexed question among theologians, whether the absolution of the priest alone constitutes the essence of the Sacrament of Penance, or whether the absolution of the priest and the acts of the penitent, contrition, confession and satisfaction are equally essential or not. Some regard the absolution as matter and form of the Sacrament, while others regard the acts of the penitent as the matter and the absolu-

tion as the form. The patrons of the former opinion regard the acts of the penitent as a condition without which there is no valid Sacrament. The adherents of the more generally admitted opinion look upon contrition and confession as materially essential parts, and satisfaction as a material integral part. This question, however, is only of speculative importance; practically it amounts to nothing, as it will not prevent the different theologians from administering the Sacrament under the same conditions. Suffice it to say that the latter opinion seems to be more in keeping with the teachings of the Councils of Trent and Florence. In cases of urgent necessity, when a dying man, for instance, is unable to confess, and he can give no apparent sign of contrition, as long as there is room to believe, that he would desire to receive the Sacrament if he could express himself; every priest would give him absolution under condition, because, as they say, the Sacraments were instituted for man's benefit. There is no absolute certainty that the absolution of the priest is not the matter and form of the Sacrament of Penance; and therefore priests are justified in acting accordingly in case of extreme necessity. It is not the same for some other Sacraments, their matter and form are clearly defined and in the absence of the one, the other can not be applied. The words of Baptism, for instance, would do no good to a dying child, if there is no water at hand. The above will enable us to understand rightly the answer of the Catechism, that sin is remitted through the absolution of the priest. The absolution is the form of the Sacrament; it completes the matter, and the words of the priest directly cause the remission of sin and the restoration of God's friendship. The absolution is not a mere declaration of remission, as the early Protestants would have it; it means actual remission. It means also that the sins duly confessed are not merely covered over, as Luther proclaimed, but entirely blotted out, in as far as their guilt is concerned. The friendship of God cannot be restored to the soul, as long as mortal sin abides in it. God, who sees the innermost recesses of our hearts, cannot give Himself to a heart wherein mortal sin lurks. It may seem incomprehensible that God connects such results with so simple an action, and the cry is heard now, as it was heard centuries ago: "How can man forgive sin?" Nothing is impossible to God. He who can attach to the pouring of a

little water and the uttering of a few words the sonship of God and the heirship to His kingdom for one who was until then His enemy by sin, can also commission a man to forgive in His name and by a few words only any crime, however grievous it may be, and ratify in heaven the action of His minister on earth.

189. *Q. How do you know that the priest has the power of absolving from the sins committed after Baptism?*

A. I know that the priest has the power of absolving from the sins committed after Baptism, because Jesus Christ granted that power to the priests of His Church when He said: "Receive ye the Holy Ghost. Whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven them; whose sins you shall retain, they are retained."

We are required by one of the articles of the Apostles' Creed to believe in the remission of sins. To understand this question thoroughly, we must consider, 1st, that Christ gave to His Church the power of the keys, or the power to forgive sins; 2nd, that this power extends to sins committed after Baptism, 3rd, that this power was given to the priests only.

I. That Christ gave to His Church the power to forgive sins is a dogma of faith. Scripture is very clear and explicit on this point. Before actually conferring that power Christ promised it first to Peter, and then to the other Apostles. After Peter's confession of the divinity of Christ, the Saviour addressing Peter, spoke to him in the following words: "I will give to thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven. And whatsoever thou shalt bind upon earth, it shall be bound also in heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth, it shall be loosed also in heaven" (Mat. 16: 19). A little later He promised the same power to all the Apostles in the same words (Mat. 18: 18). He fulfilled His promise when after His resurrection He breathed on His Apostles and said to them: "Receive ye the Holy Ghost. Whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven them; and whose sins you shall retain, they are retained" (John 20: 22). "By these significant and most clear words," says the Council of Trent, "the holy Fathers have always understood that Christ communicated to the Apos-

tles and to their lawful successors the power to forgive and to retain sins, to reconcile the faithful fallen after Baptism."

We have abundant proofs of the belief of the early Christians on this point. St. Zepherinus, at the end of the second century, claimed this belief as an Apostolic Tradition. Tertullian, after becoming a Montanist (the Montanists denied the power of the Church to forgive certain heinous sins), thus ridicules one of the acts of this Pontiff: "I hear that an edict has gone forth, and a peremptory one at that. The Sovereign Pontiff, that is, the Bishop of Bishops, proclaims: I forgive the sins of adultery and fornication to those that shall have done penance." Pope St. Cornelius in 251 condemned the Novatians as heretics, because they denied the power of forgiving sins. The schismatic Greeks believe in the Sacrament of Penance. The High Church of England is doing all in its power to restore that belief among its followers. The fair-minded cannot attach any other meaning to the words of Christ, than that which accords with the teaching of the Catholic Church.

II. It is equally a dogma of faith that this power extends to all mortal sins committed after Baptism. The Church has not hesitated to condemn as heretics those who tried to curtail that power. The teaching of the Church is entirely conformable to Holy Scripture, the practice of the Apostles and the Tradition of the Church. First, the words of Christ promising and conveying that power without restriction; therefore the Church is given power to remit all sins. Secondly, it was thus the Apostles understood and acted. St. Paul absolved the incestuous Corinthian. St. John reconciled with God, as Eusebius relates, a young highway-man. Thirdly, Tradition at all times and places gives testimony that such is the belief of the Church in this matter.

III. When Christ spoke the memorable words whereby He instituted the Sacrament of Penance, He had other followers, besides the Apostles, yet He addressed only the Apostles. The Council of Trent defines, that the words of Christ apply to the priests only, and not to the simple faithful. Tradition unanimously proclaims this belief. Suffice it to quote one of the Latin and one of the Greek Fathers. St. Ambrose says: "It seems impossible that sins should be forgiven by Penance; but Christ gave that power to the

Apostles, and they transmitted it to the priests." St. Chrysostom says: "What power, pray, can be greater than that? The Father has given all judgment to the Son, and behold I see the Son gives the same to the priests." There is no reason to imagine that this power was to die out with the Apostles. It was to be a part of the divine economy of the Church, which should endure as long as there would be sinners to be saved, that is, unto the end of time.

190. *Q. How do the priests of the Church exercise the power of forgiving sins?*

A. The priests of the Church exercise the power of forgiving sins by hearing the confession of sins, and granting pardon for them as ministers of God and in His name.

The priest has the power really to forgive sins; the nature of his commission demands that he should act as judge and either retain or forgive sin. According to most forms of Protestantism, which profess remission of sin, the minister simply declares that sin has been remitted by God. It is a dogma of faith, that the priest in the Sacrament of Penance, all other conditions being observed, really and indeed forgives sin, as a judge after hearing a case, passes sentence. This again is sound theology and entirely conformable to the teaching of the Bible and of Tradition. The words whereby Christ promised and conferred that wonderful power, imply a judicial action, not a mere declaration. The Catechism says that the priest exercises the power given him by hearing the confession and granting pardon as God's minister and in His name. Without that procedure the words of Christ could have no meaning. He gave His Apostles the power to forgive and to retain sins, therefore there must be some sins that ought to be forgiven, and others that should be retained. The forgiving or retaining must, of course, be done with due discretion, that is, the priest must examine each case and judge, and the sin is to be forgiven or retained according to his judgment. The priest has not, or at least is not supposed to have, any knowledge of the sin, except it be made known to him in confession. The contrary idea would be absurd, when applied to a civil tribunal. How ridiculous it would be for a judge to decide a case without hearing it! Admitting that Christ empowered His ministers to forgive or retain sin, this neces-

sarily implies confession. Wonderful power! St. Chrysostom says: "Heaven receives its principal authority from the earth, because the judge sits on earth, the Lords follows the servant." It is self-evident that the priest forgives in the name of God, not in his own. By sin God is offended, not the priest; the offended party remits and restores His friendship.

Protestantism tries to evade the words of Christ, however clear they may be, by raising the most absurd objections. It would have us believe that the words above quoted (John 20:22), must be understood as referring to the remission of sin following the preaching of the Gospel and Baptism, the mission given to the Apostles in the last Chapter of Sts. Matthew, Mark and Luke. The words as related by St. John evidently refer to another occasion and relate a different institution; the words are different, and the circumstances also. Therefore the two quotations are not at all parallel.

Since our adversaries cannot deny that Christ gave the above power to His Apostles, they pretend that it was intended personally for them. Scripture is opposed to such a view; this power, as well as all the others given them for preaching the Gospel and converting and saving mankind, was not given to them for their mere personal use, but for the benefit of the Church; hence this power would remain in the Church to the consummation of time, to be exercised by their successors. "Remember," says Tertullian, "that Christ left the keys to Peter and through Peter to the Church."

They further object that the power to forgive does not extend to all sins, as Scripture testifies that certain sins cannot be forgiven. We answer that those Scriptural exceptions are only apparent; rightly understood they simply mean that for one who has fallen into certain heinous sins, it is very hard to obtain remission, but not impossible, if he is truly repentant.

191. *Q. What must we do to receive the Sacrament of Penance worthily?*

A. To receive the Sacrament of Penance worthily we must do five things:

1. We must examine our conscience.
2. We must have sorrow for our sins.

3. We must make a firm resolution never more to offend God.

4. We must confess our sins to the priest.

5. We must accept the penance which the priest gives us.

The five things here given by the Catechism as required for a worthy confession, are indeed necessary, yet not all equally so. A penitent, unwilling to comply with one of them would be unworthy of absolution; except perchance he who otherwise would be sure that he has committed only certain mortal sins and no others, might dispense with the examination of conscience.

The first thing we should do is to examine our conscience, in order to find out the sins we have committed, that we may be able to know and confess them. If we wish the end, we must also use the means. To obtain the remission of our sins, we must confess them; to confess them we must know them; and as we have not, like David, continually our sins before our eyes, we must collect our thoughts in order to remember our misdeeds. Various Canons of the Church make this preparation indispensable. Our confession must be entire; it must include all our mortal sins; if, through want of reflexion, our confession is not entire, it is void and even sacrilegious.

Without sorrow for our sins, God can not forgive them. He who is without sorrow for his sins, must have no displeasure at having offended God. Such a disposition would make him an enemy of God; how could he become His friend at the same time? Sorrow, therefore, is of absolute necessity. Without sorrow, there is no possibility of obtaining forgiveness. He who has no sorrow, has no desire of being forgiven. God cannot forgive a sin against the sinner's will. This is of all requisites to obtain remission the most essential and indispensable.

A firm resolution never more to offend God is included in the sorrow we must have for our sins. We cannot be really sorry, if we intend to offend God again. It may be that, in spite of the best resolutions, we afterwards fall again, so great is human weakness; but without this firm resolution, the friendship of God cannot be restored to us. We may be sorry and form a good resolution, and, at the same time, fear that we may break it; such a disposition

rather indicates love of God and the intimate knowledge of our weakness. God could hardly impose an easier obligation on us to fit us for so great a benefit, than to tell us, like to the lepers, to go and show ourselves to the priest, and confess to him our sins. It is so natural to the human heart to communicate its deepest secrets to at least one trusted friend. Who could be a truer friend to the sinner than he who is and acts as God's minister in the tribunal of Penance? Sin transforms us into spiritual lepers; to be cleansed of that horrible disease, the remedy is certainly not too hard. The absolution of the priest remits the guilt of sin and the eternal punishment due to it, but it may not remit all the temporal punishment. That we may be able to expiate all the temporal punishment due to sin in this life, rather than defer it to the other world, where we shall have to pay it rigorously in full to the last farthing, the Church encourages us to perform acts of atonement and imposes on us a penance, whenever we receive the Sacrament of Penance. We shall treat all of these points more fully in the following pages.

192. *Q. What is the examination of conscience?*

A. The examination of conscience is an earnest effort to recall to mind all the sins we have committed since our last worthy confession.

The examination of conscience must, generally speaking, precede confession; as a rule, the penitent is obliged under pain of mortal sin, to make a diligent examination of his mortal sins. The reason of this is very plain. As he is obliged to confess the number and the kind of his mortal sins, he is also obliged to use moral diligence to recall them to mind. He who is obliged to the end, is also obliged to the means necessary to that end. The Council of Trent says: "The penitent must confess all the mortal sins, which he can recall to mind after a dilgent examination." The Catechism calls it an earnest effort, that is, an effort such as we are wont to use in matters of greater importance; the integrity of confession is, beyond doubt, a matter of importance, more so than any earthly concern. The effort required, however, is such as not to render the Sacrament too burdensome. Then also the same diligence is not to be required from all. Greater diligence is demanded from those who confess rarely, than from those

who confess often; greater earnestness is required from those who are absorbed in earthly cares and transactions; less is demanded from the rude and the ignorant, than from those who are better instructed. A short examination is sufficient for those who have a tender conscience, because if they had committed a mortal sin, their conscience would have left them no rest. For those who are scrupulously inclined, it may sometimes be advisable to omit the examination.

This examination must cover all the time elapsed since our last worthy confession. The Catechism advisedly says *worthy* confession, because if our previous confession was null and void, the sins we then confessed have to be mentioned in the present confession, just as if they had never been confessed. We must examine ourselves from the time of our last worthy confession, with sufficient diligence, that we may be able to recall our sins and confess them. It is not necessary to write them down.

193. *Q. How can we make a good examination of conscience?*

A. We can make a good examination of conscience by calling to memory the commandments of God, the precepts of the Church, the seven capital sins, to find out the sins we have committed.

The manner of examining our conscience as here given by the Catechism is not the only one, but it is a very good one especially for those who have not been to confession for a long time. The diligence required to recall our sins demands that we proceed with order. Most of our prayer books have for the examination of conscience several questions on each of the points indicated by the Catechism, which we should address to ourselves, if we have been leading a careless life.

194. *Q. What should we do before beginning the examination of conscience?*

A. Before beginning the examination of conscience we should pray to God to give us light to know our sins and grace to detest them.

God gives to all sinners, however hardened, sufficient grace, whereby they can avoid sin and be sorry for it.

It is truly sufficient, in so far at least that other and greater graces can be obtained by prayer. God does not wish the death of the sinner, but that he may be converted and live (Ezech. 33:11). St. Stephen could truly reproach the Jews with a continual resistance to the Holy Ghost; this he could not have done so, had they been altogether abandoned by God. A soul in the state of mortal sin is unworthy of God's grace; it cannot lay the least claim to it. But prayer is the omnipotence of God in the hand of man. God promises every good gift to prayer. Prayer is therefore the first step to justification. We should, as the Catechism requires, pray for grace both to know and detest our sins. Both of these acts are intimately connected together. Love or hatred follows the knowledge of an object; we cannot love or hate what we do not know. Before examining our conscience, we therefore pray God to give us light to know not only the number and kind of sins we have committed since our last worthy confession, but also their malice. Penance is justly called the tribunal of mercy; in it God is ready to forgive us even the greatest crimes, provided we confess them and are really sorry for them. Considering how precious a gift is the forgiveness of sin and the restoration of the rights of the children of God, how anxious should not the sinner be to dispose himself for the reception of that gift? Without prayer the sinner cannot behold sin in all its horror, nor can he detest it as he should. Yet without a hearty detestation of it, there can be no remission; hence the necessity for the sinner not to overlook this important point in preparing for confession.

LESSON EIGHTEENTH

ON CONTRITION

195. *Q. What is contrition, or sorrow for sin?*
A. Contrition, or sorrow for sin, is a hatred of sin and a true grief of the soul for having offended God, with the firm purpose of sinning no more.

This definition of contrition is given by the Council of Trent. In its decrees on Penance it adds that contrition occupies the chief place among the acts of the penitent; it is not only the great act of the virtue of penance, but also the most necessary act on the part of the penitent for the reception of the Sacrament of Penance, because it is the cause and the source of the others. Three parts constitute contrition, grief of the soul, hatred of sin and the purpose of sinning no more. The Catechism requires grief of the soul, because the soul is the subject of this grief, not the sensitive appetite, or feeling, which indeed may share in the grief, but only accidentally. Hatred of sin is shown by the will regretting having sinned; it consists principally in retracting the evil will, in destroying sin in as far as it depends on man. That is why theologians generally agree that the essence of contrition consists in this hatred of sin. The purpose of sinning no more, is indeed, essential to contrition, but it must not necessarily be as explicit as the two previous acts, a virtual purpose, included in the efficacious hatred of sin, is by many deemed sufficient. Contrition or, as hereafter explained, attrition, is absolutely indispensable to obtain the remission of our sins. God is, indeed, goodness and mercy itself, even towards the worst of sinners; but, however merciful He is, He does not nor can He pardon a sinner, unless he be repentant and hate his sins. Reason alone, independent of Holy Scripture, which is very explicit on this point, is sufficient proof of this important truth. By sin man takes up weapons against God and despises His law. How can peace be established, when the rebel will not have it? If there

is no hatred of sin, how can man expect to be a child of God again, as God necessarily hates sin. By sin man turns to creature and recedes from God; as long then as he does not take the opposite course, he cannot return to God; as God says by the prophet Joel (2:13): "Rend your hearts, and not your garments, and turn to the Lord your God." The word contrition is derived from the Latin word *conterere*, which means to crush, to break. As the land must be plowed and broken up, before it can bear crops, so also must the soul be disposed by a salutary contrition to bring forth fruits to the Lord. The better the soul is crushed in this way, the more worthy will it be again for God's grace. The necessity of contrition demands that in preparing for confession the penitent should take particular care to excite himself to true sorrow. Frequent confessions sometimes prove apparently fruitless, because there is no true sorrow, no real hatred of sin. Often much time is devoted to calling to mind our sins, while contrition, the chief act of the penitent, is almost overlooked. By such carelessness we are liable to expose the Sacrament to nullity, and become more guilty in the eyes of God. In the Old Law as in the New, contrition was at all times a necessary condition to obtain the remission of sin.

196. *Q. What kind of sorrow should we have for our sins?*

A. The sorrow we should have for our sins should be interior, supernatural, universal, and sovereign.

The essence of contrition, as explained in the previous question, indicates these four marks of true contrition. As the Church has certain marks by which it may be known, so also true contrition is known by these four qualities. If our conscience testifies to the absence of any of them, we may be sure that our contrition is not sincere. If we were unfortunately in the state of mortal sin, the absence of any of these marks would make our confession sacrilegious.

197. *Q. What do you mean by saying that our sorrow should be interior?*

A. When I say that our sorrow should be interior, I mean that it should come from the heart, and not merely from the lips.

Contrition is a grief of the soul, and not of the sen-

sitive appetite. That this grief can exist without being exteriorly manifested, is beyond doubt. There are stages of sickness during which it would be impossible to the soul to give expression to its thoughts, and yet the soul might be capable of performing its own actions as before. It may be again that our words or actions do not portray the state of our soul. Lies are very common occurrences; they are the unnatural acts, whereby our words or actions convey the reverse of the mind's conviction. If our contrition therefore merely came from the lips and not from the heart, it would be a lie, and a lie to the Holy Ghost. That God could not and did not attach to such contrition the promise of forgiveness, is self-evident. By sin the soul has offended God; by sin it left God and turned to creatures; the soul therefore must return to God. The mere assertion of the lips does not effect this change. We sinned, because we willed it; our heart is the guilty party, our body has merely been the instrument used by the will to violate the law of God. Our heart has worked the evil, therefore the heart must suffer, be crushed, hate and detest sin. Merely to say we repent is not actually to repent; something more than mere words are needed. It would on our part be a tremendous mistake, if we were to imagine that it is sufficient for us, in order to have our sins forgiven, to say by heart or read in a prayerbook the act of contrition. The words we utter must be the faithful expression of our interior feelings. If no such correspondence exists, we have no true sorrow.

198. *Q. What do you mean by saying that our sorrow should be supernatural?*

A. When I say that our sorrow should be supernatural, I mean that it should be prompted by the grace of God, and excited by motives which spring from faith, and not be merely natural motives.

It is supernatural in its principle, if it is prompted by the grace of God; it is supernatural in its motives, if these spring from faith, or may in some manner be referred to God.

The Council of Trent teaches that justification in an adult begins with the grace of God through Jesus Christ. And again: "Those who have fallen from the state of grace through sin, can again be justified if, excited by grace, they

endeavor to obtain by the merits of Christ in the Sacrament of Penance the grace they have lost." This has always been the unanimous teaching of the great schools and illustrious theologians. It is easy to prove the truth of this Catholic doctrine from numerous texts of Holy Scripture. The Psalms of David are full of such expressions as the following: "Convert us, O God our Saviour; O God of Hosts, convert us. I have gone astray like a sheep that is lost, seek Thy servant. Convert me," says Jeremiah (31:18) "and I shall be converted. For after thou didst convert me, I did penance." In the twenty second chapter of St. Luke we read about the fall and the wonderful conversion of St. Peter. The Saviour looked on Peter and excited in him such a contrition, that the fallen Apostle began to weep bitterly. St. Ambrose writing of this passage says: "Thou on whom Jesus looks, deplore thy sins. Peter denied and wept not, because the Lord had not looked on Him; again Peter denied and wept not, because the Lord had not yet looked on him; Peter denied his Master a third time, Jesus looked on him, and Peter wept bitterly." Many more texts may be adduced, but what can be clearer than the following testimony of St. Paul in his second Epistle of Timothy (2:25). Having told him to admonish with modesty those who resist the truth he adds; "if peradventure God may give them repentance to know the truth, and they may recover themselves from the snares of the devil, by whom they are held captive at his will." Quoting this text St. Augustine says: "Except God give it, who can do Penance?" "Believe most firmly," says a great writer, "and doubt not in the least that none here below can do Penance, if God has not enlightened and by His gratuitous mercy converted him."

In the first Councils of the Church it is plainly declared that Penance is a gift of God. So have the Popes in the early ages of Christianity taught.

This shows how sadly our separated brethren are mistaken, when in a moment of excitement they profess conversion and sorrow, and think that their excited sentiments are a sure guarantee of sorrow and remission of sins. Not only must our sorrow be supernatural in its principle, it must also be supernatural in its motives. The difference between sorrow from supernatural motives and sorrow from natural motives, is made very plain in Holy Scripture.

King Pharaoh had disobeyed God's command; he regretted this disobedience many a time, when calling Moses and Aaron, with a sorrowful heart he sighed: "I have sinned against the Lord your God and against you" (Exod. 10:16). Each time he promises amendment. Saul said to Samuel: "I have sinned, because I have transgressed the commandment of the Lord. But now bear, I beseech thee, my sin and return with me that I may adore the Lord" (1 Kings 15:24). Judas was sorry and said: "I have sinned in betraying innocent blood" (Mat. 27:4). And yet what did their sorrow benefit any of these? Absolutely nothing; notwithstanding their sorrow and regret, they are lost, for their sorrow was merely natural.

On the other hand, we hear David, the murderer and adulterer, as guilty as any of the foregoing, or perhaps, owing to the graces he had received, still more so, saying: "I have sinned against the Lord;" and immediately he receives from the Prophet Nathan the assurance that his sins have been forgiven (2 Kings 12:13). Mary Magdalen, the great sinner, throws herself at the feet of the Saviour, expressing her sorrow without even uttering a word, and immediately she hears from the lips of the Saviour: "Many sins are forgiven her" (Luke 7:47). The thief on the cross, after a whole life probably spent in sin, said at the last moment with a contrite heart: "Lord, remember me when Thou shalt come in Thy Kingdom" (Luke 23:42), and immediately he hears the answer to his request: "This day thou shalt be with Me in Paradise." Whence this difference in the effects of contrition? With God there is no respect of persons. It is because for the former their motives for sorrow were merely earthly motives, whereas for the latter their motives were supernatural, that is, springing from faith and referring to God.

199. *Q. What do you mean by saying that our sorrow should be universal?*

A. When I say that our sorrow should be universal, I mean that we should be sorry for all our mortal sins without exception.

Our sorrow in confession must extend to all mortal sins without exception; that is, to all mortal sins, which have not already either been directly forgiven, or implicitly on

account of their having escaped our memory. The reason of this is that no mortal sin can be forgiven without a real sorrow for it, and because one mortal sin cannot be forgiven without the other; for sanctifying grace cannot be infused into our soul, so long as it is stained with the guilt of a wilfully unrepented mortal sin. The Catechism says that our sorrow must extend to all mortal sins, leaving the question as to whether our sorrow must extend also to all venial sins. Theologians tell us that venial sins must not necessarily be all confessed; one may be forgiven without the other, therefore we may be sorry for one kind of venial sins without being sorry for other kinds of venial sins, and therefore also validly receive the Sacrament of Penance. As to venial sins of the same species, theologians commonly teach that we cannot be really sorry for one venial sin of a certain kind without being sorry also for the other venial sins of the same kind; for instance, we cannot be really sorry for one lie, without being sorry for the other lies we told. If one, however, were to confess venial sins only, he would, under pain of mortal sin, be obliged to be sorry for at least one of them, as he would otherwise deprive the Sacrament of an essential part, and consequently of its effect. Whether the penitent must absolutely be sorry for all the venial sins he confesses, is again another question. A few theologians think he must be; the great majority, however, hold that this is not strictly necessary. We may, therefore, safely admit, that if a penitent confesses several venial sins, it is sufficient that he be sorry for them without thinking of any one in particular. It is well to remember however, that considering the malice of even a venial sin, it is desirable that we be really sorry for all of them, as they occur to our mind.

200. *Q. What do you mean when you say that our sorrow should be sovereign?*

A. When I say that our sorrow should be sovereign, I mean that we should grieve more for having offended God than for any other evil that can befall us.

There can be no doubt but that our sorrow must be sovereign, otherwise it would not be a hearty detestation of sin. Many are the texts of Holy Scripture that require us to love God above all with our whole heart; by the same commandment we are obliged to detest sin

above every evil, for it deprives us of God's friendship; being an offense against God it is the greatest of evils, and therefore it is reasonable that we should detest and avoid it more than anything else. St Paul teaches that under no condition may evil be done, in order that good may follow (Rom. 3). Hence we must hate sin more than we may rejoice at the acquisition of any good, however excellent it may be. Sorrow for sin may be sovereign in two different ways. Both of which must affect the soul, but not necessarily the body; for there is no need of tears or any other exterior manifestation of sorrow. One way is when the will, by a supreme effort, detests something; the other way, when the will considers the detestation of a thing of far greater importance than the acquisition of any good or the avoidance of any other evil. The former regards more the subject, whereas the latter rather refers to the object; the former consists in its intensity, the latter in its appreciation; both are not necessarily connected. So it may happen that even holy people will be more intensely sorry for the death of their children, than for their sins, although if the option were given them, they would rather lose their children than offend God. St. Jerome writes of St. Paula of Rome, that she took the death of her children so to heart, that it brought her to the brink of the grave; history does not say that she was so intensely sorry for the sins by which she had offended God. There is no doubt, however, that this holy woman would have preferred to see all her children die rather than to offend God again by even a venial sin. Bearing in mind this distinction, we say that our sorrow, to be sovereign, needs not be so in intensity, but must be so at least in appreciation.

Various arguments bear out the truth of this proposition. First of all, all the texts of Scripture requiring the sinner to be converted to God with all his heart, suppose a sovereign sorrow in appreciation, but not in intensity. Pious people, such as St. Paula of Rome, are the best interpreters of what God requires of the sinner; they would not be saints, if sorrow for sin demanded the intense sorrow they naturally experienced at the loss of those dear to them. Then again there is a great difference in the intensity of the contrition of good Christians and penitent souls. The contrition of Mary Magdalen would not be so highly praised wherever the Gospel is preached, if all true penitents

had an equally intense sorrow, although their sorrow were really sovereign in appreciation. Besides, if this supremely intense sorrow was required, no one could be more sorry for one sin than for another; experience, and even reason, teaches us the reverse to be the case. The more heinous our sin, the more we feel grieved, and sound reason approves it. Finally, if a supremely intense sorrow was required for sin, we could not only never be sure of having such a sorrow, nor could we even prudently believe that we sufficiently detest our sins, because our contrition could be still more intense than it is; and hence we would be apt to lose our peace of mind altogether. But who can reasonably imagine that God, in His infinite mercy, would have instituted a remedy for sin that would fail to bring us peace of mind? Therefore true contrition for sin does not require either a certain degree of intensity, or a certain length of time. The good thief on the cross had a real contrition, since it opened for him the gates of heaven; but the Evangelist does not record that he expressed his sorrow by shedding tears. The arguments given above only show what is absolutely needed, but it cannot be denied that, considering the enormity of sin, we should endeavor to shed repeatedly tears of regret over each of our mortal sins, as the saints have done. David bewailed his sins every night; Peter wept bitterly; Mary Magdalen washed with her tears the feet of the Saviour. Our sorrow, to be genuine, must be such, that we really consider sin a worse evil than any other that could befall us and that we hate and detest it accordingly.

201. *Q. Why should we be sorry for our sins?*

A. We should be sorry for our sins, because sin is the greatest of evils and an offense against God our Creator, Preserver, and Redeemer, and because it shuts us out of heaven and condemns us to the eternal pains of hell.

We have seen before that contrition or sorrow for sin, to be good, must be supernatural, that is, it must be supernatural in its principle and supernatural in its motives. The Catechism here treats of these motives; and these motives, as here given, embrace both perfect and imperfect contrition. Contrition means a detestation of sin; to detest sin reasonably, we must know that it is something extremely hateful. The nature of sin reveals to us its malice. There

is nothing in creation so vile as sin. To us it is the greatest of evils with the exception of its eternal punishment. No other imaginable evil can be compared with it. Everything else has a good side, and, in as far as it is a being, it is good, but sin is the negation of all good. If we could view sin, as God sees it, we could not imagine anything worse. It is thoroughly bad in itself, and to us it is the source of the worst calamities. The greatest temporal loss, death, is nothing compared to it, because sin means not only temporal, but eternal death. If we only considered the innate malice of sin, it would not require much effort for us to be exceedingly sorry for having committed it. What is sin in reference to God? It is an offense against God our Creator, Preserver and Redeemer. Man is indebted to God for all he is and all he has. By virtue of his creation, man belongs to God; the most elementary gratitude obliges him to acknowledge that fact. By sin man tries to turn creation against God, and uses the noble faculty which places him at the head of the visible creation, to dethrone, if possible, the God who made Him. Creation does not make man independent of God; for his continued existence he needs the support of God; for preservation is called by philosophers a continual creation. If God were to withdraw His hand from us for a single instant, we should that very same instant cease to be. By sin man defies the power of God and forces Him in as far as he is able to withdraw His hand. If the sinner could only realize his sad plight, how anxious he would be to emerge from so dangerous a state. But what more powerful incentive to contrition can the sinner have, than to consider that his sin is an offense against his Redeemer? Let him place himself at the foot of the cross, and say to himself: "This is my work, I am the cause of Christ's death." How could he behold his Redeemer covered with wounds, without most heartily detesting sin, which inflicted them? Mortal sin at once closes the gate of heaven to the sinner and causes him the greatest possible loss. No earthly loss can be compared with it; all earthly goods compared to heaven are less than a drop of water compared to the ocean. Yet a single mortal sin debars us from that precious heritage, which would otherwise be ours through God's mercy.

So much for so little! For, after all, what benefit does sin bring us? Not only does sin cause us incalculable loss,

but it condemns us besides to the eternal pains of hell. Not a moment is promised us; death may come at any time. What an evil sin must be! A consideration of these motives would show what sin is, and enable us to detest and abhor it as it deserves. Any of these considerations will supply sufficient motives for a hearty and supernatural contrition.

202. *Q. How many kinds of contrition are there?*
A. There are two kinds of contrition: perfect contrition and imperfect contrition.

In Holy Scripture these two kinds of sorrow are not explicitly mentioned, but as we shall see in the following two questions, the teaching of Catholic theologians concerning them is founded on Scriptural authority. The Catholic Church, as represented in the Council of Trent, admitted the distinction. None can reasonably deny that there are in Scripture numerous instances of sorrow, such as to dispose the penitent to receive immediately the remission of his guilt and the punishment due to it. The Fathers of the Council of Trent quote as an instance of imperfect contrition the sorrow of the Ninivites. The preaching of Jonas had inspired them with fear; stimulated by fear, they commenced to do penance and obtained mercy from God. Luther admitted perfect contrition, but he looked upon imperfect contrition as bad, because according to him, being inspired by fear, it made man a hypocrite, and was consequently all the more sinful. In this as in nearly all his teachings, he was decidely anti-Scriptural. His aim was to protest, and the result is the negation of all truths. For a clearer understanding of the Catholic doctrine on contrition, we add, in a few words, the points that are certain and those that are controverted.

1. It is absolutely certain that some sort of sorrow is required for salvation from the sinner who had the misfortune of committing an actual mortal sin. 2. It is equally certain that the kind of contrition proceeding from the heinousness of sin and the fear of hell, is a gift of the Holy Ghost, and disposes the soul to receive the grace of God in the Sacrament of Penance. 3. It is certain also that perfect contrition reconciles man with God, before the Sacrament of Penance is really received. 4. Hence it follows, with the same certainty, that perfect contrition is not required to receive worthily the Sacrament of penance; at-

trition being sufficient. 5. Theologians disagree about the question whether or not contrition, to be perfect and to reconcile the sinner at once with God, must be sovereign, not only in appreciation but also in intensity. St. Thomas with most theologians argues that any sorrow having the nature of perfect contrition, whatever its intensity, blots out sin at once. 6. It is also dubious whether sorrow proceeding from the fear of hell, unaccompanied by any act of love, is sufficient to obtain the remission of sins in the Sacrament of Penance. We will explain the most common opinion of theologians on this point when treating of imperfect contrition. There are two kinds of contrition, perfect and imperfect; the first is called generally contrition, the second attrition. Nominally they mean the same thing; but in Catholic Theology they stand respectively for the two kinds of contrition.

203. *Q. What is perfect contrition?*

A. Perfect contrition is that which fills us with sorrow and hatred for sin, because it offends God, who is infinitely good in Himself and worthy of all love.

Perfect contrition is that which proceeds from perfect charity; and this may be in two different ways. First, it may proceed from a formal act of charity, as for instance, if, considering the goodness of God, I love Him above all things, and consequently hate sin above all other evils. Secondly, it may proceed from a virtual act of charity, as, for instance, when from a consideration of God's goodness, I am led to detest sin, which is opposed to such goodness without, however, eliciting a formal act of charity. In both cases it would be perfect charity. Such was the contrition of Mary Magdalen. Her great sorrow proceeded from perfect charity; her many sins were forgiven her because she loved much. Perfect contrition differs from imperfect contrition by the motive inspiring it, and also by the effects. The motive of perfect contrition is the love of God above all, that is, the love of God for Himself, for His own sake, not for us, nor for our sake, accompanied by the hatred of sin as opposed to His infinite goodness. The effect of perfect contrition is to justify man immediately, but it should at least, implicitly include the desire of receiving the Sacrament of Penance. Some modern heretics such as Jansenius, denied the efficacy of perfect contrition, unless it were

most intense, or in some extraordinary cases, when no confessor can be had, such as death or martyrdom. A Christian cannot refuse to believe the doctrine set forth by an Ecumenical Council and by the Sovereign Pontiffs and founded on Scriptural authority. The Council of Trent clearly teaches that perfect contrition immediately reconciles man with God; it adds, however, that this reconciliation must not be ascribed to contrition without including the desire of the Sacrament. The Roman Pontiffs have repeatedly condemned contrary doctrines. The Catholic teaching is comformable to the Bible. "The wickedness of the wicked," says Ezechiel (33:12), "shall not hurt him, in what day so ever he shall turn from his wickedness." His wickedness would, indeed, hurt him, unless it were taken away the very moment he returns to God by perfect contrition. "Charity," says St. Peter (1. 4:8), "covereth a multitude of sins." We have quoted above the words of St. Thomas saying that even the lowest degree of perfect contrition at once wipes out all sin.

We have said that perfect contrition, to produce this effect, must at least implicitly include the desire to receive the Sacrament. Penance is the means appointed by the Redeemer whereby sins committed after Baptism are forgiven. He requires of us that all mortal sins shall be confessed, if possible. Anyone seeking remission of sin without the Sacrament shows himself ill-disposed to do what Christ demands, and therefore does not love Him above all. The desire alone without contrition cannot produce justification, neither can contrition without the desire or resolution to receive the Sacrament of Penance, when possible. An implicit desire or resolution is most probably sufficient. If one is so disposed, that he loves God above all and proposes to do all He requires, he implicitly promises to go to confession if an opportunity offers. Perfect love and perfect contrition are gifts of God; and the great means to which all graces are promised is prayer, which is the only help left to the sinner to dispose himself for the reception of so great a favor.

204. *Q. What is imperfect contrition?*

A. Imperfect contrition is that by which we hate what offends God, because by it we lose heaven and deserve hell; or because sin is so hateful in itself.

The specific difference between perfect and imperfect contrition consists in the motive prompting the act. If God is the motive of our contrition, it is perfect; if anything else outside of God moves us to it, it is imperfect contrition, or as theologians call it, attrition. The Catechism here gives three motives for imperfect contrition, the loss of heaven, the fear of hell and the hatefulness of sin. We should not forget that what we have said of contrition in general applies to both kinds of contrition. The four qualities of contrition apply also to attrition. Hence imperfect contrition must be a true sorrow, a hatred of sin, and must include the purpose of sinning no more. The following question will give us an opportunity to explain in what sense attrition is supernatural in its motive.

205. *Q. Is imperfect contrition sufficient for a worthy confession?*

A. Imperfect contrition is sufficient for a worthy confession, but we should endeavor to have perfect contrition.

It is the common opinion of theologians that attrition, excluding the will of sinning, is sufficient for a worthy confession. A sorrow that does not exclude the will to sin, is not sufficient, as in reality it in no way refers to God. Theologians prove the sufficiency of attrition from the teachings of the Council of Trent. It says speaking of attrition: "Although it cannot justify the sinner without the Sacrament of Penance, nevertheless it disposes him to receive the grace of God in the Sacrament of Penance." They argue that since the Council here speaks of the proximate disposition to Penance, *disposes* must mean the same as *suffices;* taken in another sense, the words of the Council would be meaningless. Attrition includes an incipient love of God, but distinct from that love which constitutes perfect contrition. The least degree of the love of God for His own sake is perfect contrition. Imperfect contrition causes in us a beginning of love, because the sinner goes to confession, in order that he may enjoy again God's friendship. Besides, the fear of hell includes a beginning of love, because Scripture says: "The fear of God is the beginning of his love" (Eccli. 25:16). The sinner fears hell, because he likes eternal happiness. Hell consists not only in the suffering of the senses, but also in the pain of loss, which

is the privation of the beatific vision; this disposition includes a beginning of love of God, who is our supreme good, as St. Thomas teaches. Moreover, a man who has imperfect contrition, purposes to keep the commandments of God, and as Christ says: "He that hath My commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth Me" (John 14:21). This is enough to show that attrition is sufficient with the Sacrament of Penance, but, as the Catechism adds, we should endeavor to have perfect contrition. The Roman Ritual imposes on the Confessor the obligation to induce the penitent by all means in his power to make an act of perfect contrition. But in case he does not make such an act, the confessor can lawfully absolve the penitent who has attrition, and the latter is not deprived of the effects of the Sacrament of Penance.

206. *Q. What do you mean by a firm purpose of sinning no more?*

A. By a firm purpose of sinning no more I mean a fixed resolve not only to avoid all mortal sin, but also its near occasions.

The necessity of contrition for the remission of sin carries with it the necessity of a firm purpose of sinning no more. Contrition would be inconceivable without it, at least implicity. This firm purpose is not a velleity or a simple desire to avoid sin, as if one would say: "I would wish to abstain from sin, if I could, or if I was not tempted." Such a purpose would be no determination of the will. On the other hand, a promise or a vow of sinning no more, is not required; but a serious determination of the will is demanded not only, not to commit the same sins again, but, in general, to avoid all mortal sins in the future. This purpose may be explicit or implicit. It is explicit, when it is included in a hearty detestation of sin; sorrow for sin implies it, because if one is really sorry for having sinned, he also implicitly proposes to sin no more. Theologians argue the question, whether an implicit purpose is sufficient in the Sacrament of Penance. Theoretically there is a difference of opinion, but practically there is no difficulty, as it will hardly ever happen that one who is really sorry, will omit making explicitly a good resolution. Before confession or in the confessional, all penitents recite the act of contrition, which explicitly contains the good resolution. The

purpose of sinning no more must have the following conditions, when referring to mortal sin: it must be firm, efficacious and universal. Firm, not in regard to a future event, as it does not preclude the possibility of falling again, but by the present disposition of will, so as to exclude any will or velleity to sin. This firmness of will is not affected by a fear of again falling into sin, owing to human frailty; this fear seems rather to be an indication of a true purpose; he who fears sin, does not wish to sin. Even the belief that we shall fall again, owing to our weakness, as shown by our experience in the past, does not prove a want of firmness in our present disposition, as we firmly resolve with the help of God's grace to abstain from sin. St. Peter was not deemed unworthy of Holy Communion, although Our Lord foresaw that he would not persevere, because his disposition at the time was good. The purpose of sinning no more must also be efficacious, that is, we must resolve not only not to sin any more, but also to use all the necessary means to avoid sin, and especially to remove all the proximate occasions of sin; this does not mean, however, that relapse is a sure sign of a previous defect in our resolution. Lastly, the purpose of sinning no more must be universal in regard to all mortal sins. As to venial sins, the purpose of avoiding at least one of the venial sins confessed is sufficient, or even the will to lessen their frequency, as this implies the resolution to amend one's life. A man may propose to avoid all venial sins, which are entirely deliberate, for he can morally avoid them; as for the others, which are only half wilful, a sorrow for having committed them, and a purpose to be diligent in at least reducing their frequency, is sufficient. It is advisable in confession rather than enumerate all our venial sins, to accuse ourselves of some for which we feel really sorry, and of all the others in general. A confession of a number of venial sins without a real sorrow for any or without a firm purpose of at least avoiding one, would expose the Sacrament to be null and void, and eventually make us guilty of a sacrilege.

207. *Q. What do you mean by the near occasions of sin?*

A. By the near occasions of sin I mean all the persons, places, and things that may easily lead us into sin.

An occasion of sin, considered in general, is any external

thing inducing to sin, because of its nature or the weakness of the man who meets it; such is, for instance, keeping company with a bad companion, or dwelling in certain surroundings. There is a great difference between occasion of sin and danger of sin. Danger of sin implies anything internal or external, that may lead us to sin. Occasion of sin does not mean either habit of sin, which is altogether internal, such as the habit of swearing. There are two sorts of occasions, remote and near or proximate. It is remote, when the occasion rarely leads to sin; near occasion of sin cannot be arithmetically determined; it must be determined morally, taking into consideration the quality of the sin and of the temptation, and the frailty of the sinner. As sins of thought or word are more easily committed than external deeds, therefore a greater number is required for the former than for the latter. A near occasion of sin is further distinguished into continual or present, and interrupted and absent; living in adultery or fornication with the object of one's passions, would be a continual and present occasion; the saloon is to the drunkard an illustration of the other. A near occasion again may be absolutely so, or relatively to certain individuals. In the former case, such a near occasion would lead all or almost all individuals to sin, as frequenting disreputable houses. An occasion may be a near occasion relatively, when considering individual dispositions, it may be so to one and not to another; when the occasion does not lead all or almost all individuals to sin, but only the one or the other.

So it may be that the saloon is a near occasion of sin to one, and none at all to another. Again a near occasion of sin may be voluntary or necessary; voluntary, when it can easily be avoided; necessary, when the occasion cannot be removed either physically, as to a prisoner to whom his company in jail may be an occasion of sin, or morally, when the occasion cannot be removed either without sin, as might be army life to an enlisted soldier, or without some very serious inconvenience as when the removal of the occasion would lead to the loss of something very valuable. Having seen the different occasions of sin, it now remains to see which occasions we must firmly resolve to avoid in order to receive validly the priestly absolution. We are not obliged to avoid the remote occasions of sin, as we would then be obliged to go out of this world, as St. Paul says

(1 Cor. 5:10). "The creatures of God," says the wise man, "are turned to an abomination and temptation to the souls of men" (Wisd. 14:11). In the interest of our immortal souls, however, we should avoid at least a great many of the more dangerous occasions, although remote, such as familiarity with persons of the opposite sex. The occasions make the sinner and therefore must be avoided as sin itself. These occasions may be, as the Catechism says: persons, places or things. As to the necessary occasions, dangerous conditions which are beyond our control, we must endeavor by all means in our power to effect that these occasions become remote; by prayer, mortification, frequent confession, or other means: in this we may avoid being allured into sin by them.

LESSON NINETEENTH

ON CONFESSION

208. *Q. What is confession?*

A. Confession is the telling of our sins to a duly authorized priest, for the purpose of obtaining forgiveness.

Confession shares with a few other dogmas of Catholic belief the distinction of being assailed by the combined forces of all Protestant creeds. They have done their utmost to do away with it altogether. Yet it has survived, because it has more than a human authority in its favor. It is a divine institution not to be undone by man. Christians of all shades cannot overlook the importance of the Apostles' Creed, which lays down the fundamental truths of Christianity. We must believe in the remission of sins, and we claim that auricular confession is part of the means appointed by Christ to attain that end.

Confession is the telling of our sins, either mortal or or venial, to a duly authorized priest. Although the priest at his ordination receives the power to forgive sins, yet in the exercise of that power he must be directed by those, who as successors of the Apostles, rule the Church of God. He must, therefore, be commissioned by the bishop, in whose diocese he is, to hear confessions and use that power. He is fully authorized to do so, after he has received the requisite spiritual jurisdiction from the Bishop. The mere telling, however, of our sins to a duly authorized priest constitutes a part of the Sacrament of Penance only then, when it is done for the purpose of obtaining forgiveness.

We will now prove that sacramental confession is divinely instituted as the necessary means of sharing the effects of the Sacrament of Penance. Its divine institution will also prove its necessity.

The whole argument may be summed up in a few words, as follows: Those guilty of mortal sin are by a divine command obliged to do penance and to seek reconciliation with God. Now the necessary means for that reconciliation after

Baptism, is confession as defined by the Catechism. Therefore all those who, after Baptism, have had the misfortune of falling into mortal sin, are obliged to confess their sins to a priest. Admitting that Christ endowed His Apostles with judiciary powers, we are bound to admit that confession is necessary, as we cannot reasonably conceive that they were appointed to sit in judgment over causes unknown to them, or that they should arbitrarily forgive or retain sins. There are three passages in Holy Scripture, by which this judiciary power may be demonstrated.

Christ said to Peter: "I will give thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt bind upon earth, shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth, it shall be loosed also in heaven" (Mat. 16:19).

Christ afterwards said to all the Apostles: "Amen I say to you, whatsoever you shall bind upon earth, shall be bound also in heaven; and whatsoever you shall loose upon earth, shall be loosed also in heaven" (Mat. 18:18).

After His resurrection Christ breathed on His Apostles and said to them: "Receive ye the Holy Ghost. Whose sins you shall forgive they are forgiven them, and whose sins you shall retain, they are retained" (John 20:22).

The first passage promises to Peter that judicial authority; the second promises it to all the Apostles, and the third confers it. Our adversaries do not deny that by these words Christ confers on the Church power to forgive or to retain sin; but they would have us believe that this power means a mere declaration of remission, but not the real power to forgive sins by superior authority, and therefore that the priests are not real judges of the sins of man. That this is not the Scriptural meaning is clear from the words used. First, we have the metaphor of the keys; keys are not given to declare that the doors are opened or closed, but to open or to close them. Secondly, the words to loose, to bind do not mean to declare that anything is loosed or bound. We do not deny that God, to forgive or retain sin, does not need the ministry of the priest; He can do so directly Himself; but the fact is clear that He has chosen a means by which the reconciliation of sinners with God may be effected; and this means supposes the confession of sins. Thirdly, when Christ gave to the Apostles power to forgive sins, He also

gave them power to retain sins; hence He delegated to them the power, first, to examine whether the sinner is worthy of remission or not, and then to forgive or retain his sins according to his deserts, and He promises to ratify their judgment; this is very different from a mere power to declare sins forgiven. Fourthly, moreover, the word *whose* confirms this and indicates that the Lord did not commission them to forgive sin indiscriminately or arbitrarily, but only the sins of those whom they would judge worthy of forgiveness. No exceptions are made to preaching of the Gospel; it must be preached to every creature. The words of Christ giving this commission to the Apostles do not imply any discrimination; not so with the power of the Holy Ghost and with the power of forgiving sins, for they have also the power of refusing forgiveness. Fifthly, Christ breathed on His Apostles; thereby giving them the Holy Ghost and with Him the gift of forgiving sins; as the wind carries away a cloud, so does the priestly absolution take away sins.

All the Holy Fathers are unanimous in explaining the above texts in the sense, which the Church attaches to them. The Acts of the Apostles and their Epistles show that the first Christians understood them so. We read that "many of them that believed, came, confessing and declaring their deeds. And many of them who had followed curious arts brought together their books and burnt them before all" (Acts 19:18). Here we have the faithful coming to St. Paul to declare their deeds, their sins; and make due amends for the wrong done by removing their occasions. "Confess your sins one to another," says St. James (5:16). Confession of sins to man then existed; this man must be the one, whom in the preceding verses he tells us to call for anointing the sick. "If we confess our sins," says St. John, "God is faithful and just, to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all iniquity" (1 John 1:9). Here we have actual confession of sins specified and made a condition of their remission.

There are other arguments to show that confession is of divine institution. First, by reason of its antiquity. Such a rite must have had a beginning, but no other beginning has ever been assigned than the command of Christ. When Protestants refer to the Popes as the inventors of confession, they speak of men who declared when and how often confession was necessary, in order to be looked upon as a

living member of the Church. Secondly, confession was intended to be a work of Penance; no temporal or ecclesiastical authority could have possibly succeeded in making its practice so universal; the attempt would have raised a universal outcry and protest, and would have been a matter of history. Thirdly, confession is by experience proved to be such a help to a better life that, if we were in want of other arguments, this would seem sufficient to show that God must have instituted it. Fourthly, miracles have often proved its divine institution. To safeguard its practice, God has never allowed that a priest, not even among those who apostatized and lost all sense of shame, should divulge anyone's confession heard by him. How could this be, if Christ did not safeguard this His great means of mercy?

209. *Q. What sins are we bound to confess?*

A. We are bound to confess all our mortal sins, but it is well also to confess our venial sins.

One of the Canons of the Council of Trent is as follows: "If any one says that to obtain remission of sins in the Sacrament of Penance, it is not necessary by divine command to confess all and every mortal sin, called to mind after a due and careful examination, even those committed in thought which are against the two last commandments of the Decalogue, as also the circumstances which change the kind of sin; but that such confession is only useful to instruct and console the penitent, and was formerly only observed for the imposition of a canonical penance; or if any one says that those who try to confess all their sins, do not wish to leave anything to divine mercy to forgive, or finally, that it is not lawful to confess venial sins, let him be anathema."

Such is the teaching of the Catholic Church concerning the matter of confession. We are bound to confess all and every mortal sin; that is, we must give the number and kind of our mortal sins, in as far as we remember them.

We have seen in the preceding answer that Christ ordered all sins to be declared as a necessary condition of forgiveness in the Sacrament of Penance. This declaration, to be profitable in this judicial action, must include the number and kind of the sins to be confessed. Therefore all and every mortal sin must be confessed. The priest cannot forgive the sins which are not declared, therefore all must be

declared, that all may be forgiven. The priest must judge of the whole cause, to either forgive or retain; therefore all mortal sins must be declared, as otherwise it would be impossible for him to judge of the whole. The Church understood it so from the very beginning, as the whole ecclesiastical history on the subject shows. The obligation of confessing all our mortal sins means, that our confession must, as far as possible, be materially entire. As, however, God does not oblige us to anything impossible, and as it may be impossible to make our confession materially entire, it is sufficient that our confession be formally entire, that is, that we confess all and every mortal sin which we are able and bound to confess. We shall see, when treating of the entirety of confession, that there are causes preventing us, in some instances, from making our confession entire. The obligation of confessing all and every mortal sin does not apply equally to venial sins, because there are other means by which remission of venial sins may be obtained; such as the sacramentals. They must not, therefore, be necessarily submitted to the priest in confession; but, as the Catechism expresses the teaching of the Church, it is well to confess our venial sins. We have seen that the Sacraments, besides sanctifying grace, also confer sacramental grace. We go to confession, not merely to obtain remission of our sins, but also to gain strength, in order to resist future assaults. It is not necessary for one to be in mortal sin to receive the priestly absolution; a venial sin is sufficient matter to be remitted. In view, then, of the other graces derived from the use of the Sacrament of Penance, it must be a great help also to those who have not had the misfortune of falling into mortal sin. The practice of all good priests and religious of going to confession every week, although they have none but venial sins to confess, is a sufficient guarantee that it is well to confess our venial sins.

210. *Q. Which are the chief qualities of a good Confession?*

A. The chief qualities of a good Confession are three: It must be humble, sincere, and entire.

The Catechism does not give all the qualities of a good confession, but only the chief. St. Thomas gives sixteen; he adds, however, that not all are necessary to the validity of confession, but to its well being. The greatest and most

necessary of all are sincerity and integrity. That our confessions may be not only valid, but good in every way, we add a few words about the qualities enumerated by St. Thomas, which are not considered in the following questions of the Catechism. Sacramental confession should be *simple,* that is, the declaration of our sins must not be mixed up with gossip or matters which do not belong to it. *Pure,* that is, with the right intention of recovering God's friendship and obtaining the graces accompanying it; if we should have any other intention, our confession may be sacrilegious or less worthy, according to the greater or smaller culpability of such intention. Frequent, because confession has been instituted for sinners; therefore the oftener we fall, the oftener also we must have recourse to it. For certain classes of sinners frequent confession may be the only remedy to effect a permanent cure. *Clear* without equivocations, that the confessor may understand the actual state of the penitent. *Discreet,* that is, the penitent must accuse none but himself, and express his sins, especially those of impurity, as modestly as possible. *Voluntary,* that is, we must not be forced to make it; it must proceed from our own free will. *Not deferred* too long after falling into sin; the longer we abide in sin, the less liable we are to make a good confession. *Ready to obey,* that is, the penitent must be prepared to listen to the advice of the priest and follow his instructions. Some of these qualities are more necessary than others. The chief qualities, however, are those given by the Catechism, humble, sincere and entire.

211. *Q. When is our Confession humble?*

A. Our confession is humble, when we accuse ourselves of our sins, with a deep sense of shame and sorrow for having offended God.

Of all virtues humility is the one which draws God's favors upon us. "Do you all insinuate humility one to another," says St. Peter, "for God resisteth the proud, but to the humble he giveth grace" (1. Pet. 5:5). "He regarded the humility of His handmaid" said the Blessed Virgin, shortly after being raised to the sublime dignity of Mother of God. Humility is a virtue by which man takes in his own estimation the place he should occupy and give to others their due. It is "a virtue," says St. Bernard,

"whereby man, through an intimate knowledge of himself, becomes vile in his own eyes." Humility makes us think what is true of ourselves. Let the sinner consider himself as he really is, when receiving the Sacrament of Penance, and he will evince the feelings described by the Catechism and his confession will be humble. Let him put to himself the question: "Who am I?" The answer will be: "A beggar in need of an undeserved favor from the Master, whom he has offended; a debtor not having wherewith to pay, and now imploring the remission of his debt; a criminal, who has deserved to lose the life of his body and soul." How natural is it not for a man, found guilty of a heinous crime, to blush for shame in the presence of those who have his life in their hands! How far deeper would that sense of shame be, if he had but the faintest hope that it would do him any good? The priest in the confessional, although possibly a sinner like ourselves, is the judge before whom by God's command we must appear; he takes the place of Jesus Christ, the judge of the living and of the dead. In His name the priest says: "I absolve thee from thy sins." Before this tribunal rich and poor, learned and ignorant, we are all alike, sinners at the feet of our Supreme Judge. We have humility in our hearts, whereby we acknowledge that as criminals we have deserved the eternal fire of hell, and are unworthy of forgiveness; but that we hope to find favor with an infinitely merciful God. We must be humble in our words and in the accusation of our sins, manifesting them with a holy fear; humble in our exterior. In many ways we may offend against this first quality of a good confession, as telling our sins as we would speak of any earthly occurrence, without any sign of shame; arguing with the priest who tries to make us realize the enormity of our sins, expressing displeasure at the penance imposed, as if it exceeded the sins we have confessed. If we could but see the enormity of our sins, we would consider no treatment as too bad for us. Shame and sorrow for our sins should make truly humble; "a contrite and humbled heart God will not despise" (Ps. 50).

212. *Q. When is our Confession sincere?*

A. Our Confession is sincere, when we tell our sins honestly and truthfully, neither exaggerating nor excusing them.

We have explained before, that Christ gave judicial authority over the sins of men to the Apostles and their successors. The confessional was thereby intended to be a tribunal, at which the penitent acts as accused and accuser, and the priest as judge; no lawyer is needed on either side. The priest, by virtue of his commission, must either forgive or retain, as the cause submitted to him may require; he must, therefore, hear the case such as it is. A correlative duty, imposed on the penitent by the same divine authority, is to submit to the priest his case exactly as it is, that he may know whether he is to forgive or to retain. The penitent must tell his sins honestly and truthfully. As the priest would be guilty of a sacrilege, if he were to pass on a case in a manner different from what his commission demands; so also is the penitent guilty of a sacrilege, if he wilfully proposes his case other than it is; it would be a lie, and an intrinsic evil, like a lie, cannot surely be the means whereby to obtain God's pardon. There must be no exaggeration and no excuses. An excuse will not alter the act as committed. There may be causes taking away or mitigating essentially the guilt of an action, but in that case it would be unnecessary to confess the act. If we are prevented by sickness to hear Mass, the obligation ceases, and, of course, no sin is committed. We must represent ourselves to the priest such as we are; false excuses only tend to make us more guilty in the sight of God. Exaggeration is also a misrepresentation, and equally deprives our confession of veracity. It is frequently a mistake of pious souls to represent themselves as worse than they actually are; they are afraid of not making their sins bad enough; for fear of making a mistake, they fall into another. By doing so, however, they mislead the confessor and make it impossible for him to judge them rightly. We must confess our sins as near as possible as we know or sincerely believe ourselves guilty before God; and ever remember that the priest is but the representative of Him from whom nothing can be hidden.

213. *Q. When is our Confession entire?*

A. Our Confession is entire, when we tell the number and kinds of our sins and the circumstances which change their nature.

Integrity is the most important quality of confession.

Integrity is twofold. Material integrity includes all the mortal sins committed after Baptism, which have not been directly remitted, in so far as number, kind and necessary circumstances are concerned. Formal integrity includes all the mortal sins which the penitent is obliged to confess, though he may omit some through forgetfulness, or for any other reason. Properly speaking, material integrity is required by a divine command, but as it may be impossible, and as God does not oblige us to anything impossible, formal integrity alone is necessary to the Sacrament.

Formal integrity includes the number, kind and certain circumstances of all mortal sins which we are obliged to confess. If we know the exact number, we must give it, if not, the nearest to it, in as far as we know. In confession there must be no guessing. We must give the last species of our sins, as alone specifying their malice. Hence he who is guilty of theft, detraction and murder, would not confess as he should, if he said he had done great injury to his neighbor; he must specify each of them. If one has fallen into impurity, it would not be sufficient to say that he had sinned against chastity, because there are many kinds of vices coming under the generic name of impurity. Besides the number and kind, or species, we must also give the circumstances which change the nature of the sin, by adding another mortal sin; so is adultery a greater crime than fornication, because it adds the sin of injustice to impurity, therefore the penitent must disclose the circumstance of his being married or of sinning with a married person. This is, however, absolutely necessary only when the circumstance adds a mortal sin, not when there is merely question of a venial sin, or merely aggravates the sin. We must give the circumstances which change a venial sin into a mortal sin, that is, make an act which is generally but a venial sin, a mortal sin, so may an action, which is of itself but a venial sin, be the cause of a great damage. In like manner, we must express the circumstances which so reduce the malice of an action, which is generally a mortal sin, but on account of them is but a venial sin. If some one killed a neighbor in self-defense, it may not be a mortal sin, and must not necessarily be confessed, but if it is confessed, the circumstances must be added. Other circumstances not included in the above, must not necessarily be given. In case of doubt, whether your action, through

insufficient reflexion or absence of grievous matter, is a mortal or venial sin, you would not be strictly obliged to confess it, especially if you have more reason to believe that it is not a mortal sin. The same is true in case you doubt whether you have confessed a mortal sin or not. In both cases, however, confession is advisable, except to those of a scrupulous frame of mind, whose great anxieties are the only cause of doubt.

Formal integrity, as required in confession, admits causes excusing from material integrity. There are three such causes: 1, Forgetfulness or inculpable ignorance; 2, physical impossibility; 3, moral impossibility.

1. Under the first cause we are excused from confessing sins, which after a careful examination of conscience have escaped our memory. 2. There are various cases of physical impossibility. Those unable to speak the language of the confessor are excused, provided no other confessor speaking the language of the penitent is to be had. An interpreter may, of course, be used, but there is no command to secure the services of one. The dumb, even if they can write are excused, because confession in writing is an extraordinary means, never prescribed by the Church. The dying unable to confess, or those in imminent danger of their lives, through fire or shipwreck, etc., having no time to confess all their sins are similarly excused. 3. There may be also cases of moral impossibility, when those are excused who cannot confess all their sins without a great detriment foreign to confession, to himself or to the confessor or to any one else, be it temporal or spiritual. Such cases might occur when one could not confess except in the presence of others, or when a confessor in times of a pestilential epidemic could not stay with the sick for a sufficiently long time without almost certainly contracting the disease himself.

214. *Q. What should we do if we cannot remember the number of our sins?*

A. If we cannot remember the number of our sins, we should tell the number as nearly as possible, and say how often we may have sinned in a day, a week, or a month, and how long the habit or practice has lasted.

Sins must be confessed with their number and kind, unless there be a moral or physical impossibility. In order

to recall them all to mind, a diligent examination of conscience must precede. If after that it is impossible to give the exact number, a materially entire confession is not demanded, whilst, at the same time, the obligation remains to give the number of sins as near as possible, and we should add then *more or less.* If afterwards we should remember the exact number, it either is notably greater or smaller than the number confessed, or only a little. In the last case there is no reason for uneasiness. If it is notably greater or smaller than the number given, there would be no need of repeating, if we gave a number even greatly in excess of the sins actually committed, because they are included in the number we gave. If however, the sins should be greatly in excess of the number given, we must give the excess in our next confession, because these sins have really not been confessed. In case we could form no correct idea of an approximate number of our sins, we must tell about how often we have sinned in a day, a week or a month. By knowing how long it is since our last confession, the confessor may form an idea of the state of our soul. If even this is impossible, we must then state how long the habit or practice of sin has lasted. For people who have led a professionally bad life, this may be sufficient. We must not forget, however, that the necessary means must be used to find out the exact number; hence the necessity of a good examination of conscience including prayer for assistance, that we may know our sins, and a serious endeavor to recall them to mind.

215. *Q. Is our Confession worthy if, without our fault, we forget to confess a mortal sin?*

A. If without our fault we forget to confess a mortal sin, our Confession is worthy, and the sin is forgiven; but it must be told in Confession if it again comes to our mind.

By a divine command all mortal sins committed after Baptism must be declared in confession; our present forgetfulness cannot forever except us from so serious an obligation. This is further made clear by the condemnation of an heretical proposition by Pope Alexander VII, which is as follows: "We are not obliged to express in a following confession sins committed or forgotten through imminent

danger of life or for any other reason." The opposite of this is therefore Catholic truth. The question, however, is whether sins forgotten without our fault, must be confessed as soon as possible. Most theologians answer this in the negative, because as these sins are already blotted out, there is no danger to the soul in a delay. Very learned theologians even claim that the confession of these forgotten sins may be deferred until we are again obliged to go to confession by virtue of another commandment; as for instance, during the following Eastertime, unless we make another confession in the interval. The reason of this is, that we must declare in confession all mortal sins which have not yet been confessed, which we now remember; therefore forgotten mortal sins, if recalled to mind, must be confessed in our next confession. From the above it follows that it is not necessary to go to confession again, if before Communion a forgotten mortal sin should come to our mind. We could not even be obliged to make an act of contrition for it, because there is no such command, and because there is no reason for it, as the sin has been already indirectly forgiven. It seems advisable, however, that the sin should be confessed as soon as possible, that it may be directly forgotten, and that it may not again escape our memory. Sins forgotten are, as we said, indirectly forgiven, that is, not in virtue of the Sacrament or of the priestly absolution, but in virtue of sanctifying grace infused in our souls by the Sacrament. If we declare even immediately after absolution a sin forgotten without our fault, the priest would repeat the absolution, because all sins should be directly forgiven by virtue of the priestly absolution.

216. *Q. Is it a grievous offense wilfully to conceal a mortal sin in Confession.*

A. It is a grievous offense wilfully to conceal a mortal sin in Confession, because we thereby tell a lie to the Holy Ghost, and make our Confession worthless.

The Catechism gives two reasons why it is a grievous sin wilfully to conceal a mortal sin in confession. First, because it is telling a lie to the Holy Ghost, and secondly, because it makes our confession worthless. By such a confession, far from obtaining remission of our sins, we

become more guilty in the eyes of God. In the Acts of the Apostles we read how Ananias was punished for having told a lie to the Holy Ghost. He had probably consecrated his property to the service of God. After having sold a piece of land, he kept back for himself a part of the price. Peter rebuked him for it, and said: "Thou hast not lied to men, but to God" (Acts 5:4). And Ananias hearing these words fell down and gave up the ghost. By concealing a mortal sin in confession we lie not only to man, but to God. Our whole attitude is a lie. We wish to be looked upon as repentant sinners, kneel down as befits our standing before God, and make ourselves believe that God is not present at His tribunal of mercy to which he invites sinners. The priest only takes the place of Christ, who empowered him to pronounce the sentence. Christ had promised to ratify in heaven the judgment of his Apostles and their successors in the sacerdotal office. A lie is an intrinsic evil always sinful. But how much more grievous a sin must not a lie be in confession, as it is not a lie to man only, but to God. In addition to the guilt of a lie, it effects that the very words appointed by Christ for the reconciliation of the sinner are devoid of any salutary effect. The priest on earth says: "I absolve thee," whilst the eternal Priest finds the accused all the more guilty. The sinner, by concealing his sins in confession, endeavors to give the lie to Christ. Such a confession is not merely worthless, but also sacrilegious. A sacrilege is a profanation of a holy thing. The holier the thing, the more criminal is the profanation. Who will deny that the Sacraments are among the holiest things? Profaning the Sacrament of Penance by wilfully concealing a mortal sin must, therefore, be one of the worst forms of sacrilege. To realize more fully the enormity of this offense, let us open the Bible, and see how God allowed sacrileges to be punished which do not compare with the profanation of a Sacrament of the New Law. Andronicus, for laying hands on Onias, the anointed of the Lord, was thus punished. Antiochus ordered that the sacrilegious wretch should be put to death, the Lord repaying his deserved punishment. Lysimachus shared the same fate, Scripture recording that this sacrilegious man, was slain beside the treasury (2 Mach. 4: 38, 42). Menelaus, the instigator of their sacrilege, escaped for a while, but it was not long until Antiochus commanded

the sacrilegious wretch to be thrown down from a tower into the ashes, all men thrusting him forward unto death; he had not so much as a burial in the ground (2 Mach. 13:6). To other sins there may be palliatives, but what excuse can there be for a sacrilegious confession? Could the Almighty demand less from the sinner before reinstating him into His friendship, than a humble confession? Man naturally feels the want of opening his conscience and discovering to a fellow-man the evil deeds filling it with remorse. He finds relief in exposing to a friend the sources of this worst anguish. Natural as it is to man to take another into his confidence, he naturally, also dreads publicity. No such fear need be entertained from him, to whom Christ commands him to expose the wounds of his soul. To facilitate still further the condition on which Christ is prepared to grant pardon to the criminal, he assures absolute secrecy; never will He allow that a sin confessed be revealed. Considering then that the condition on which pardon is promised is so easy, and that to conceal a mortal sin wilfully in confession is a profanation of one of the holiest things, and a direct lie to the Holy Ghost, we cannot be surprised that the Catechism calls it a grievous offense.

217. *Q. What must he do who has wilfully concealed a mortal sin in Confession?*

A. He who has wilfully concealed a mortal sin in Confession must not only confess it, but also repeat all the sins he has committed since his last worthy Confession.

All and every null and void confession of mortal sins must be repeated, whether the confession be culpably invalid or not, whether the nullity is attributable to a defect of the penitent, or of the confessor. The reason of this is, that in none of these cases have the mortal sins been directly forgiven by the sacramental absolution. To be obliged to repeat the sins previously confessed, the previous confession must have been undoubtedly invalid; in case of reasonable doubt, there would be no obligation of repeating it. The above principle holds good for a confession that is invalid through any cause whatever; such as might be the absence of contrition, the absence of intention or

jurisdiction on the part of the confessor, or the case under consideration where a man wilfully conceals a mortal sin in confession. It might happen that a confession is null and void and even sacrilegious, and that on that account all subsequent confessions are not invalid. Supposing that a sin which was wilfully concealed in one confession, is not wilfully forgotten in a subsequent confession and supposing all other conditions of a good confession are fulfilled, the sins confessed in this last confession must not be repeated because it was formally entire. With this exception, which will be very rare, the sin concealed and all other sins confessed or committed since our last worthy confession must be repeated. This repetition, however, may be different according to different circumstances. If the confession is to be repeated to a different confessor, an invalid confession must be repeated entirely, in as far as number, kind and necessary circumstances are concerned, because it was null, and to a different confessor, it is as if it had not been made at all. If the confession is to be repeated to the same confessor, he either has a confused remembrance of the sins, or if he has entirely forgotten them, the penitent would now give him a confused idea of his state, it would then be sufficient for the penitent to accuse himself of all the sins concealed in that confession. It is not necessary that the confessor remember all and every mortal sin. In many cases this would be impossible. The confessor could not remember them when giving absolution in a confession covering many years of a criminal life, or when he desires to give the penitent a trial of good will and bids him come back for absolution after a certain time, if he deems deferring absolution to the best interest of the penitent. In all these cases it is sufficient that the confessor has an idea of the state of the penitent. Scrupulous penitents may often consider previous confessions worthless for one reason or another. They may doubt whether their contrition was sufficient, whether they confessed their sins clearly enough. These persons must above all practise obedience. Should the confessor tell them not to repeat their sins, they may rest assured that the Lord will not hold them responsible for neglect. Disobedience on their part would have very serious and evil results.

218. *Q. Why does the priest give us a penance after Confession?*

A. The priest gives us a penance after Confession, that we may satisfy God for the temporal punishment due to our sins.

Having in the preceding lessons considered the first three parts of the Sacrament of Penance, confession, contrition and absolution we now come to the last, satisfaction. Satisfaction is defined by theologians: "The acceptance and the voluntary endurance of a temporal punishment by which, through the merits of Christ, the sinner pays his debt of punishment;" hence also a twofold satisfaction is demanded of us, one for the guilt and the other for the punishment. The satisfaction for the guilt, or penance, which God requires for its remission, is contrition and confession. By punishment we understand a hardship or an inconvenience contrary to our will or inclinations, which is inflicted on us for the purpose of punishing sin. There is a twofold punishment for sin, the eternal and the temporal; therefore, there must be also a twofold satisfaction for the punishment, the one for the eternal punishment and the other for the temporal punishment. The sacramental satisfaction concerns only the temporal punishment, as the eternal punishment is remitted by the priestly absolution. Satisfaction, therefore, as here considered, is the voluntary punishment of one's self, offered to God for one's sins, that He may forgive their temporal punishment. It is clear that this satisfaction can never of itself adequately compensate the injury done. All that we are and all we have belong to God, and we are therefore unable to satisfy God, whom we have offended, unless He deigns to accept the little we can do in satisfaction for our sins and the punishment due to them. By sin we offend God's friendship and justice. To recover His friendship we cannot satisfy God, because satisfaction requires the acceptance of God and this presupposes His friendship. That the satisfaction may be, in some manner, equal to the injury done, it is necessary that since the injury is of infinite malice, so also satisfaction should proceed from a higher principle, from man as a member of Christ and a child of God through sanctifying grace. Satisfaction, therefore, is not offered to God nor is required by God from man for the guilt, be-

cause God justifies us freely, and without any merits of our own, restores to us His friendship. Along with the infusion of sanctifying grace, God might condone all temporal punishment, but, as we will see in the next question, God does not always do so. Acting on the principle that God does not always remit all temporal punishment, the Church orders that the priest in confession, not only can, but must give a penance to the penitent. The practice of the Church from the very beginning has invariably been never to absolve a penitent without a proper penance. The very words of Christ in instituting this Sacrament seem to indicate it. He gives the Apostles power not only to retain the sins of the impenitent, but also to bind down the penitents to certain works of penance. In the power of forgiving sin and its eternal punishment must also be included the minor power of imposing a penance as an atonement for the temporal punishment due to sin. This dogma of Catholic belief is assailed by the combined forces of Protestantism. They all claim that with the remission of sin there is no further punishment due. The intention of the reformers was, in order to find disciples among the masses, to cater to the inclinations of man, and therefore to do away with the hardship or inconvenience, which sacramental satisfaction always brings with it. To prove that they are mistaken is to show that generally there remains a temporal punishment even after the sin is forgiven, and that penitential works must atone for it. The explanation of the next two questions will clearly show the consistency of the Catholic Church on this point.

219. *Q. Does not the Sacrament of Penance remit all punishment due to sin?*

A. The Sacrament of Penance remits the eternal punishment due to sin, but it does not always remit the temporal punishment which God requires as satisfaction for our sins.

The Protestants reject all satisfaction, and claim that none should be imposed on the faithful, for the reason, they say, that along with the guilt of sin all punishment is forgiven by God. According to them the penances of the primitive Church belonged to the external discipline of the Church, but had no satisfying efficacy for sin before God. The Catholic Church, on the contrary, teaches that not always

is all punishment remitted with sin, and that in the Church there is a twofold satisfaction, the one sacramental, which is not an essential but an integral part of the Sacrament of Penance; the other is called extra-sacramental and includes all the penitential works not imposed on the penitent as a satisfaction for sins confessed. With the remission of mortal sin is also remitted the debt of eternal punishment, because sin is not remitted without the infusion of sanctifying grace, which makes man heir to the kingdom of heaven. Eternal punishment being forgiven, there remains generally a debt of temporal punishment, or, as theologians put it, eternal punishment is commuted into temporal punishment. No wonder that the Council of Trent proclaimed this an article of faith; it is the belief of the universal Church, and has to confirm it a number of unequivocal passages of Holy Scripture. It is said that God brought Adam out of his sin (Wisd. 10:2), and yet a penance of over nine hundred years was to follow his reconciliation with God. A number of Israelites, in punishment for their sin of murmuring, although forgiven, perished in the desert and were excluded from the promised land. Moses and Aaron for their sinful want of confidence in God, which had been forgiven (Numb. 20), were prevented from leading the Israelites into the land they had so ardently desired. A clearer illustration still is David, who confesses his sin and is forgiven, yet so as to be sentenced to the most severe temporal punishment. He was guilty of adultery and homicide. He confessed his sins and the Prophet Nathan told him in the name of God: "The Lord also hath taken away thy sin" (2 Kings 12:13). But he was told immediately that the child which was born to him would surely die. Other visible punishments followed on this. Through vanity he ordered his people to be numbered. As soon as it was done, he saw his fault, and confessed it to God; the sin was forgiven, and yet the Lord sent his prophet to him to give him the choice between war, famine or pestilence, as a punishment for a forgiven sin. It is therefore clear that the remission of sin does not always mean the remission of all temporal punishment, which God requires as a satisfaction for our sins. According to Luther these temporal punishments are merely intended for the spiritual advancement of those who are justified; Scripture, however, shows, what the Catholic

Church teaches, that they are a satisfaction for sin. St. Augustine says: "Man is obliged to suffer even after his sins are forgiven, although sin is the cause of his misery. Punishment lasts longer than sin, lest sin might be thought unimportant, if punishment ended with it." The Sacrament of Penance has not in this respect the same effect as Baptism; Baptism remits with original and all actual sins also all punishment both eternal and temporal. The Council of Trent, however, gives us a very good reason why in the Sacrament of Penance all punishment is not so easily remitted. It is because the sins committed after Baptism are of greater malice than those committed before.

220. *Q. Why does God require a temporal punishment as a satisfaction for sin?*

A. God requires a temporal punishment as a satisfaction for sin, to teach us the great evil of sin and to prevent us from falling again.

The Council of Trent clearly indicates that sacramental satisfaction is intended for a threefold purpose. It says: "Let satisfaction be not only for the custody of a new life and a medicine for our weakness, but also for a chastising and punishment of past sins." The satisfaction imposed on us in confession must be vindictive, medicinal and preservative. The priest in the confessional must discharge the threefold office of Father, Teacher and Physician. As Father, he is obliged to receive the humble penitent with the feelings of the father of the prodigal son. As Teacher, he must explain to his penitent the enormity of his sin. As Physician he must cure the disease and prevent a relapse. The very fact that God demands satisfaction even after the sins are forgiven, shows of itself that there must be very good reasons why God demands it, as God, being Wisdom itself, always acts for a purpose. The Council of Trent resuming the utterances of the Fathers of the Church on the subject, gives us five reasons why God requires and the Church imposes a temporal punishment as a satisfaction for sin. 1, Because those fallen into sin after Baptism are guilty of a worse ingratitude and malice. Regeneration was to them an entirely undeserved gift; they had not the least claim to it; it implied for them heirship to the kingdom of heaven and sonship of God. The sin of the unregenerated is rather the offense

of an outsider, whereas the sin of those baptized, is a crime of a child against its father. 2, Because mercy should not be abused at the expense of justice. The tribunal of Penance is a tribunal of mercy mixed with justice. Baptism is all mercy, Penance is mercy and justice. Mercy takes away all the debt that man is unable to pay; justice makes him pay what he is able. Eternal guilt and punishment is beyond his means of paying. In confession God's mercy remits it without man having any rights to this particular favor; temporal punishment is within his reach and therefore God's justice demands it of him. 3, Baptism is a spiritual regeneration bestowed on the newly born without any great hardships. Penance, on the contrary, is a medicine which must work the cure of the disease by burning, cutting, sweating and other penitential exercises. By Baptism we become as new born, having in us, true enough, the germs of corruption inherited from actual sin. Penance is the curing of those wounds, which in some cases may be more deeply seated than in others, and require special treatment. Penitential works are, as the Bible so often testifies, the medicine to heal the wounds and prevent their recurrence. 4, Satisfaction is a remedy against relapse. This is in the very nature of things. We notice it even in irrational beings, with which a punishment for any displeasure caused their owners is the surest cure. Children incapable of reason must have sometimes the rod applied to make them avoid what is wrong or injurious to them. In as far as supernatural life is concerned, we are all like children, and for our own good must be treated as such. A condign punishment for the sin committed will make us think twice before repeating it again. As the punishment is of its nature medicinal, it tends to create in us a habit contrary to the habit which inclines us to sin. If over-indulgence of the appetites of the body makes us transgress God's command, the crucifixion of the body and the denial of its desires, as imposed by sacramental satisfaction, must strengthen the soul and weaken the passions of the body. 5, It is really becoming that the sinner should do something for his sins so as to suffer with Christ for them. Christ took our sins upon Himself and atoned for them. When the Master carries His cross for me, how unnatural does it not seem that I should not help Him to carry it. If we desire to rejoice, we must also be prepared to suffer

with Him. What are all the sufferings of this life compared with the happiness that is promised us?

The above reasons abundantly show that the Church is perfectly right in demanding satisfaction from us, after the sins are forgiven, in order that we may be inspired with a greater horror of sin, and thus be kept from relapsing into it.

221. *Q. Which are the chief means by which we satisfy God for the temporal punishment due to sin?*

A. The chief means by which we satisfy God for the temporal punishment due to sin are: Prayer, Fasting, Almsgiving, all spiritual and corporal works of mercy, and the patient suffering of the ills of life.

Catholic theologians teach that certain temporal punishments of this life cannot be redeemed, but must necessarily be borne. This seems to be beyond controversy. God had sometimes inflicted punishment for which He would not take satisfaction. Such is for instance, death which cannot be averted by any good works of even the greatest saint. Such also was the punishment inflicted on David. The prophet Nathan said to him: "Because thou hast given occasion to the enemies of the Lord to blaspheme, the child that is born to thee shall surely die" (2 Kings 12: 14). All his fasting and prayers could not avert the punishment. Scripture records several other instances. Catholic theology also teaches that the temporal punishment of the other world, which we would have to undergo in purgatory, may be redeemed by fasting, prayer and almsgiving and by other pious and arduous works of this life. All these works serve to pay our debts in the other world, if we perform them in the proper state and with due intention. This does not mean, however, that if we have a great many of these actions to our credit, we shall have fully atoned for all the punishment due us in the other world; God alone knows the extent of our debts. Theologians generally refer all good works by which we may satisfy for our sins to three kinds, prayer, fasting and almsgiving. There are two good reasons justifying them, 1, We must satisfy by what is ours, in as far as possible. We have three kinds of goods; those of the soul, which we give to God by prayer; those of the body, which we give to God by fasting; those outside of these which we give

to God by almsgiving. 2, All vices may be reduced to the three mentioned in the epistle of St. John, viz: concupiscence of the flesh, concupiscence of the eyes and pride of life. Fasting represses the concupiscence of the flesh, almsgiving the concupiscence of the eyes, that is, avarice, and prayer the pride of life. To fasting may be referred all that afflicts the body and is opposed to the concupiscence of the flesh; to almsgiving, all that is opposed to avarice, or at least may be useful to the neighbor; such are all works of mercy; to prayer, all that properly refers to God, such as thanksgiving, acts of contrition, etc. Theologians, therefore, rightly teach that by an act of contrition, which is a penitential work, something is always remitted of the punishment due; sorrow may be sometimes so intense, as to remit all punishment. It is easy to prove from Scripture that prayer, fasting and almsgiving are really the chief means by which we may satisfy God for the temporal punishment due to sin. All three are recommended by the Angel Raphael to Tobias: "Prayer is good with fasting and alms" (Tob. 12:8). Our Lord insisted on them in His sermon on the Mount (Mat. 6.) God speaks of prayer as follows: "Call upon Me in the day of trouble, I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify Me" (Is. 49:15). These words contain the command of prayer and the promise attached to it. Manasses when in distress, "prayed to the Lord his God, and did penance exceedingly before the God of his fathers. And he entreated Him and besought Him earnestly: and He heard his prayer and brought him again to Jerusalem into his kingdom" (2 Paral. 33:12). King Manasses had sinned, was led captive to Babylon and by prayer redeemed the temporal punishment of the loss of his throne forever. The second chapter of Joel gives us an example of the efficacy of fasting in averting the punishments which we have brought upon ourselves by sin. In the first chapter of Tobias Scripture records the remarkable example of almsgiving set us by Tobias. "Give alms," says Christ, "and behold all things are clean unto you" (Luke 11:41).

These penitential works are acceptable to God not only when they are imposed on us, but also when we perform them of our own free will. The example of St. John the Baptist proves it. His garment was camel's hair, his meat was locusts and wild honey; his bed was the ground,

his house the desert. St. John was no sinner, he had been justified in the womb of his mother, and yet he preached penance, not only by word but also by example. The praises which Christ bestows upon John and the life he was leading, show sufficiently how acceptable our works of mortification are to Him. "Anna, the prophetess, departed not from the temple, by fastings and prayers serving day and night" (Luke 2:37). Yet she was not commanded to do so; her mortifications were self-inflicted; if this service had not been pleasing to God, the Evangelist would surely not have recorded it.

The patient suffering of the ills of this life is also one of the great means whereby we can satisfy God for the temporal punishments due to sin. Sickness, poverty, cold and heat, when borne patiently in atonement for sin, will redeem the punishments due to it. Although they come naturally and independently upon us, yet by accepting them with resignation, we make so many voluntary offerings of our sufferings to God.

The other principal means of satisfaction are considered in the next two questions.

222. *Q. Which are the chief spiritual works of mercy?*
A. The chief spiritual works of mercy are seven: To admonish the sinner, to instruct the ignorant, to counsel the doubtful, to comfort the sorrowful, to bear wrongs patiently, to forgive all injuries, and to pray for the living and the dead.

All corporal and spiritual works of mercy are numbered among the chief means whereby we can satisfy for the temporal punishment due to sin. Very justly so, because God blesses in a particular manner the merciful; He promises mercy to them. Christ commands us to be merciful; in case we fail to be so, He threatens us with punishment: "With what measure you mete," He says, "it shall be measured to you again" (Mat. 7:2). Our own works could never suffice in this life to satisfy for the remnants of sin. God, however, is full of mercy, and if we are merciful to others, we shall be treated mercifully in return. The Catechism here does not give us all the works of mercy, but only the chief ones; and it begins with the spiritual works of mercy, which are so far above the corporal as the soul is above the body. Mercy is according to St. Augustine,

a hearty sympathy with the miseries of others, inducing us to lend them a helping hand, if we can. All men are our neighbor; charity cannot exclude any; we are therefore obliged to be merciful to all who may need us. Mercy must always be pleasing to God; Holy Scripture records how He views each of the chief works of mercy.

1. *To admonish the sinner.* The sinner is in the greatest need; he is altogether unable to help himself; he has fallen, and by his own exertion cannot rise again. If in mortal sin, he is deprived of spiritual life. His soul, however stained, retains the image of God. For him Christ came and suffered; He does not wish the death of the sinner, but that he may be converted and live. Those working for the conversion of sinners are continuing the work of Christ and fulfilling His wishes. A fraternal admonition may be the first means of opening the sinner's eyes on the wretched condition, to which sin has reduced him; it may enable us to save a brother. No wonder that St. Denis calls this coöperation with Christ the most divine of all divine works. By converting a sinner, we prevent the blood of Christ from being shed in vain.

2. *To instruct the ignorant.* Ignorance of things necessary or conducive to salvation is one of the greatest spiritual needs. We cannot practise or love what we do not know. Next therefore to that most divine of all works comes the instruction of those who are ignorant of their holy religion. The first step to sin is generally ignorance. Like the great High Priest of the New Law, we must have compassion on the ignorant (Hebr. 5:2). God promises an eternity of special glory to those who practise this great work of mercy, for "they that instruct many to justice, shall shine as stars for all eternity" (Dan. 12:3).

3. *To counsel the doubtful.* One of the great attributes of the God-Man on earth, as predicted by Isaiah (9:6), was that of Counsellor. Doubt is about as much of a spiritual want as ignorance; truth cannot go together with doubt, and yet truth should be the prime mover of our actions. Doubt causes even more affliction of spirit than ignorance; whereas doubt does not excuse us as much from the guilt of sin as ignorance. The difficulty of advising seems to make the work all the more meritorious. Those in need of advice must not promiscuously seek their counsellors, be-

cause although we must be at peace with many, yet only one of a thousand should be our counsellor (Eccli. 6:6).

4. *To comfort the sorrowful.* In this vale of tears every one, whether willingly or unwillingly, has his cross to carry. If the weight of the cross tends to cast down the Christian through his want of patience, and portrays to him the sufferings here below of the servants of God in colors too vivid, he is liable, in an endeavor to shake off the cross, to turn for consolation to a world, which after a while, without alleviating his sufferings, will throw him into despair and deprive him of the best of gifts, faith. The sorrowful, therefore, are in great spiritual need. He who comes to their rescue and comforts them, will help them to bear their cross patiently, and to serve the Lord cheerfully.

5. *To bear wrongs patiently.* The example of our Lord best explains the importance of this work of mercy. Insults without number were offered to Him, wrongs from the cradle to the cross, and yet He never opened His mouth to complain; never did He repay wrong by wrong. As a lamb He was led to slaughter, not even opening His mouth to a murmur. He has set us the example that we may follow in His steps. Moreover, the wrongs done us should be looked upon in a different light. If we were to receive all we deserve in this world, we should never have our proper share of wrongs. We have, therefore, every reason to bear wrongs patiently; they will help us to repair our own wrongs. "If doing well you suffer patiently" (1. Pet. 2:20) says St. Peter: "As the Lord dealeth patiently with us for our sake, so we must deal patiently with others" (2 Pet. 3:9). In doing so we are helping others, whilst at the same time we are helping ourselves.

6. *To forgive all injuries.* Not only does the Christian law demand of us that we bear wrongs patiently, but also that we forgive from our heart all injuries, whatever they may be. Failing to forgive all, we would exclude charity from our hearts. By forgiving injuries, we help our neighbor in his spiritual wants. We must first presume that the injury was not intentional; by our readiness to forgive and forget, we shall induce him to apologize, and no further harm will ensue. If it was intentional, it shows that he had been breeding hatred in his heart against us; charity had departed from him, the only way to remove that hatred,

to which he has given expression, from his heart, is by cheerfully forgiving the injury.

In answer to a question of St. Peter (Mat. 18:22), Christ clearly shows that we must always be ready to forgive. "Forgive," says Our Lord, "if you have aught against any man" (Mark. 11:25); and He threatens not to forgive our trespasses, unless we forgive all injuries done to us.

7. *To pray for the living and the dead.* The faithful on earth, like the saints in heaven and the souls in purgatory all belong to the same mystic body, of which Christ is the head. The saints do not need mercy, but the faithful on earth and the souls in purgatory are all in need of mutual assistance. We are commanded to pray one for another, that we may be saved (James 5:16). As brothers in Christ we must sympathize with one another; our charity must be shown. Prayer is, according to St. Teresa, the omnipotence of God in the hand of man; by it we shall obtain for our neighbor all that may be conducive to salvation. "A holy and wholesome thought it is to pray for the dead, that they may be released from their sins." The suffering souls are in a great need, they are unable to help themselves and must stay in purgatory until they have paid to the last farthing all the indebtedness they contracted on earth. What a merciful act on our part to satisfy for them, in order that they may the sooner be admitted to the beatific vision!

223. *Q. Which are the chief corporal works of mercy?*

A. The chief corporal works of mercy are seven: To feed the hungry, to give drink to the thirsty, to clothe the naked, to ransom the captive, to harbor the harborless, to visit the sick, and to bury the dead.

As there are other spiritual works not mentioned in the above question, so also not all corporal works of mercy are here given by the Catechism, but only the chief ones.

1. *To feed the hungry.* God allows corporal needs to exist so that their alleviation may be a source of merit to His followers. He suffers in the needy; the assistance given them is given to Him: "I was hungry," He says, "and you gave Me to eat" (Mat. 5:35). St. Paul says: "If thy enemy be hungry, give him to eat" (Rom. 12:20). Whether he is brought to that needy condition by his own fault, or through circumstances, over which he had no con-

trol, he is an object of charity for us; the act of mercy practised towards him calls for a reward from the Master, in whose name not even a glass of cold water shall be given in vain. By providing for the corporal wants of others, the practice of mercy will generally effect also some spiritual good in them.

2. *To give drink to the thirsty.* Thirst is one of the most excruciating sufferings of the body; the greater the need, the greater the merit in relieving it. As a work of mercy, this however applies to the kind of drink which the body naturally requires. Hence it would be no act of charity or mercy to one who is addicted to intemperance, to help him to gratify his vicious habit.

3. *To clothe the naked.* Any one in need of necessary clothing is an object of this work of mercy. This is one of the works of mercy recommended by Tobias (4:17) to his son and afterwards again by Isaiah (58:7). Our Lord considers as done to Himself what we do to others. "I was naked," He says, "and you covered Me" (Mat. 25:35).

4. *To ransom the captive.* A religious Order in the Church, the Trinitarians, instituted by a special intervention from heaven, sufficiently shows how pleasing it must be to God. The members of this Order pledge themselves to ransom their brethren, were it even necessary to take their place in captivity. The practice of this work of mercy may not be as common now as in days gone by, when the hordes of Mahomed's followers were wont to devastate civilized countries and make captives those whom their sword had spared. Yet there are still millions of people in pagan countries treated as badly as the captives of old. Under the benign influences of Christianity, liberty would soon dawn for them; contributing therefore to societies whose object is the conversion of nations buried in heathenism and slavery, would at the same time, be both a corporal and a spiritual work of mercy.

5. *To harbor the harborless.* St. Paul warns us not to forget hospitality. The Saviour promises on judgment day to pass a favorable sentence on those, who, when He was a stranger, took Him in. Refusing to be hospitable, like the citizens of Bethlehem, who would not harbor the God made man, may in some cases be equivalent to murder, and in many cases it betokens the absence of the true Christian spirit. Hospitality is one of the charming virtues of Chris-

tianity; unfortunately, it is not practised as it should be, since too often caste or society draws the line.

6. *To visit the sick.* The numerous Orders approved by the Church whose object is the care of the sick, is a sufficient guarantee of its noble character. "I was sick," says our Lord, "and you visited Me" (Mat. 25:35). Sickness naturally depresses the spirit, and makes us dependent upon the aid of others. The interest we take in the sickness of the body will enable us to work more efficaciously for the good of the soul, which is then also sorely in need of assistance.

7. *To bury the dead.* Tobias is repeatedly praised in Holy Scripture for having practised this corporal work of mercy. The body was the temple of the soul, that is made to God's image and likeness; for this reason the Church in the Old as in the New Law has always treated with veneration the earthly remains of the dead, that may be eternally glorified in heaven. The ceremonial of the Church at a funeral tends to impress this on our minds.

The spiritual and corporal works of mercy are all and each great helps, whereby we may satisfy God for the temporal punishment due to our sins.

LESSON TWENTIETH

ON THE MANNER OF MAKING A GOOD CONFESSION

224. *Q. What should we do on entering the confessional?*

A. On entering the confessional we should kneel, make the sign of the cross, and say to the priest, "Bless me, father"; then add, "I confess to Almighty God and to you, father, that I have sinned."

The sinner who enters the confessional with the hope of forgiveness, must assume the attitude of a sinner. He goes to the priest, representing Christ and clothed by Him with the extraordinary power of forgiving or retaining sins; and should therefore be filled with the sentiments of the prodigal son. 1, He kneels, to express by that humble attitude his confusion of having offended God, and his recognition of the enormity of his sin. 2, He makes the sign of the Cross to implore the assistance of the Three Persons of the Blessed Trinity, and to excite himself to confidence by making the sign which reminds him that the Son shed His blood and gave His life to merit even for the greatest sinners the pardon of their sins. 3, He asks the priest's blessing, and calls him father, because the priest takes for him the place of Christ, and because he is the spiritual father of his soul, and must have for his penitent, however low he may have fallen, the heart of a father. He asks his blessing and requests him to intercede for him that he may make a good confession. The priest blesses him and says the following words: "May the Lord be in your heart and on your lips, that you may confess worthily and sincerely all your sins, in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.

225. *Q. Which are the first things we should tell the priest in Confession?*

A. The first things we should tell the priest in Confes-

sion are the time of our last Confession, and whether we said the penance and went to Holy Communion.

After having asked the priest's blessing we recite the *Confiteor,* which, although not necessary, should not be omitted except the priest on account of the number of penitents to be heard or for any other reason, dispenses us therefrom. The *Confiteor* implies a general accusation of our sins to God and His saints, with a prayer to the Blessed Virgin and the Saints that they may be our protectors and intercessors before God. The *Confiteor,* as we have it now, dates back from the days of St. Pius V, who died in 1572. We next tell the priest the time of our last confession. This will show him whether we have fulfilled the precept of the annual Confession and Easter Communion. In case we, on account of habitual sins frequently committed, cannot tell the exact number of our sins, we must confess them by saying about how often we committed them, daily, weekly, or monthly; the priest must know how many weeks or months have elapsed since our last worthy confession. It is not necessary for the validity of the Sacrament, whether we add that we have said our penance and gone to Holy Communion or not; but it is well to add it, that the priest may know that all the integral parts were present in our previous confession. It will also enable him to have a clearer idea of the state of our conscience, and to know whether or how far the penance given us acted as preventive against relapse. Then again, the devil often tries to bring confusion to the soul, if he cannot lead it to open rebellion against God; he begins by making the soul feel uneasy about the performance of the penance. To add that we have said the penance will frustrate such a temptation. The devil seeking our destruction endeavors to keep us away from the table of the Lord, which gives us the surest pledge of eternal salvation. For these reasons it is best to add whether we said our penance and went to Holy Communion, although it is not absolutely necessary.

226. *Q. After telling the time of our last Confession and Communion what should we do?*

A. After telling the time of our last Confession and Communion we should confess all the mortal sins we have since committed, and all the venial sins we may wish to mention.

See the preceding lesson.

227. *Q. What must we do when the confessor asks us questions?*

A. When the confessor asks us questions we must answer them truthfully and clearly.

If we confess our mortal sins with their species and number, the confessor may not deem it necessary to ask us any questions. If our confession is not explicit enough, or even if it is, the confessor may find it necessary or useful to put us some questions. It is a general principle that the confessor is obliged to question the penitent about the kind, number and circumstances, which change the kind or species of sins, if they have not been sufficiently explained; also about the causes of sins and their near occasions whereever he reasonably presumes or prudently doubts, whether they have been sufficiently manifested or not. The reason of this is that the priest, as minister of the Sacrament, must procure its integrity, and as judge is obliged to acquire the necessary knowledge to pronounce a just sentence. This does not mean, however, that he must use extraordinary diligence to supply the possible defects of the confession. Ordinary diligence such as the penitent is obliged to use, when examining his conscience, is sufficient. With persons of a scrupulous disposition, the confessor will abstain from all questions. To illustrate the above, confessions like the following would not be sufficiently clear. "I did not hear Mass on Sundays, or I had bad thoughts; or I got drunk," etc. The number of times each sin has been committed must of course be given. Not to hear Mass without a sufficient cause is a mortal sin; with such a cause, it is no matter for confession at all, or may even be a good work, as, for instance, if the care of the sick absolutely required our services and kept us at home, it would be better not to neglect this in order to hear Mass. If sickness prevented us from going to church, it is altogether unnecessary to accuse ourselves of it. The priest must know whether our absence from Mass was culpable or not. We must express ourselves clearly enough, that he may know it. Having bad thoughts is not a sin, but indulging in them wilfully is a mortal sin. Sins of impurity differ in kind according to the difference of state, single or married. A person might get drunk, like Noah, unwillingly and not commit a sin.

If it was wilful, the confessor must satisfy himself as to the causes that led to the sin, and whether the penitent has used the precautions suggested or imposed on him in previous confessions. The obligation imposed on the priest of questioning the penitent wherever his confession is not explicit enough, lays also on the penitent the obligation of answering truthfully and clearly. If the enormity of sin should frighten the penitent into concealing it, he should have courage enough to declare this temptation of the evil one, who by that means leads so many souls to eternal destruction. By exposing the temptation, the confessor will by prudent interrogations soon lift the burden from our hearts.

228. *Q. What should we do after telling our sins?*
A. After telling our sins we should listen with attention to the advice which the confessor may think proper to give.

The priest in the confessional takes the place of Christ; in His name he pronounces the sentence of absolution. He realizes the terrible responsibility weighing upon him. He is the spiritual father, teacher and physician of the penitent. His sacred duty demands that, having in view his welfare, he should give the penitent such advice as will help him never to fall into the mire of sin again. With gentle kindness, or fatherly severity, he must warn him of the dangers which he must avoid; he must prescribe such remedies as will most likely prevent a fall in the future, and where he has reason to doubt the sincerity of his contrition, he must present such considerations as will make him detest sin from his inmost heart. The penitent has more reason to listen with attention to the advice given him in the confessional than at any other time. The priest occupying the seat of the judge of the living and the dead, could not be actuated in giving his advice, but by the welfare of the penitent. The penitent should receive it with gratitude and try to put it into practice.

229. *Q. How should we end our Confession?*
A. We should end our Confession by saying, "I also accuse myself of all the sins of my past life," telling, if we choose, one or several of our past sins.

The priest is obliged to absolve the penitent, who, having

confessed his sins, is rightfully disposed, because through confession the penitent acquires the right to absolution. It is not optional to the priest to absolve or not, when the penitent is well disposed, and when there is no great reason why absolution should be deferred for a certain time. On the other hand, the priest cannot absolve unless he is satisfied that the penitent is well disposed. The dispositions of the penitent are, besides the intention to perform his penance, confession and contrition. It is to supply a possible want in confession or contrition that Catholics follow the suggestion here offered to the penitent. In as far as confession is concerned, it must offer sufficient matter for absolution, and must be formally entire. In case the penitent does not offer sufficient matter for absolution, he must, if he desires to receive the benefit of absolution, accuse himself of a sin of his past life. By accusing himself of all the sins of his past life, he expresses, in as far as he is able, the desire to procure the integrity of confession, after having used his best endeavors to declare specifically and numerically the sins, which have not escaped his memory. For penitents, who go frequently to confession, they may probably not have to accuse themselves of any but venial sins; and possibly for these there may not be the requisite sorrow, which is part of the Sacrament. To avoid the danger of exposing the Sacrament to nullity, such penitents should accuse themselves of a sin of their past life for which they are really sorry.

230. *Q. What should we do while the priest is giving us absolution?*

A. While the priest is giving us absolution, we should from our heart renew the Act of Contrition.

We have, in the lesson especially devoted to contrition, explained its absolute necessity. Contrition must precede absolution, but whether it is to co-exist with absolution is a matter for discussion. Most probably contrition may precede confession by several days, provided it has not been cancelled by a contrary act or by any mortal sin. In practice, however, it is advisable that we elicit an act of contrition immediately before absolution, because actual contrition predisposes us more to the sacramental grace. Sorrow following absolution would be of no avail for the reception of the Sacrament, because the absolution ends the sacramental act.

LESSON TWENTY-FIRST

ON INDULGENCES

231. *Q. What is an Indulgence?*

A. An indulgence is the remission in whole or in part of the temporal punishment due to sin.

Of all questions of Catholic dogma, the doctrine on indulgences is the most strangely misunderstood and most persistently misrepresented. From the point of view of Protestants the Catholic doctrine on indulgences led to the Reformation of the sixteenth century. By it Rome had filled the measure of her iniquities, and the overflow created Protestantism. Luther was the standard bearer of the opposition. Pope Leo X., wishing to collect means to finish St. Peter's Church, granted a special indulgence, one of the conditions of which was the giving of an alms for that purpose. He selected the Dominicans to preach this indulgence in Germany. Luther, an Augustinian, out of jealousy opposed the Dominican Tetzel, as if preaching false doctrines. In fact, he had been waiting for some time for an opportunity to throw off the yoke of the Church, whose teachings discountenanced the evil impulses of his heart. He found it in the preaching on indulgences by Tetzel. The utterances and doings of Tetzel may not have all been faultless. From a possible abuse in the granting of indulgences Luther argued against any such power in the Church of Christ. His feelings of pride, hurt by the appointment of the Dominicans over the Augustinians, now developed into open revolt. This revolt is the corner-stone of Protestantism. Upon this was subsequently built a superstructure of religious negations, a protest against almost every Catholic doctrine. Individuals may err, but the Church in matters of faith and morals cannot. Her teaching on indulgences is to-day what it has always been.

An indulgence is the remission of the temporal punishment due to sin, and not of the sin or its guilt; no sin however venial it may be, is or can be forgiven by any indul-

gence. The temporal punishment generally remains after the guilt of sin and the eternal punishment have been remitted, and is to be atoned for either in this world or in the next. This punishment is due only to actual sins, as original sin with its punishment is remitted by Baptism. Eternal punishment must be remitted before any temporal punishment can be atoned for by an indulgence. This remission of the temporal punishment is granted by the Church by virtue of the keys of the Sacrament of Penance, that is, by an act of ecclesiastical jurisdiction. Its remission is granted by applying the superabundant satisfactions of Christ and of the saints. The Church possesses an inexhaustible treasure consisting of the satisfactory merits of the saints who either had not sinned, like the Bl. Virgin Mary, or whose atonement was greater than their sins required. This treasure, so says Pope Clement VI., has not been covered up in a napkin or hidden in the field, but has been left by our Lord to St. Peter, the door-keeper of heaven, and to his successors, to be used for the spiritual advantage of the faithful. This treasure, being a mere spiritual treasure, is not found in any particular place, is before God, who, by virtue of these superabundant satisfactions, is moved to bestow mercy on those to whom they are applied by the Church. It remains now for us to prove that the Church has really the power of granting indulgences. For a Catholic this is an article of faith, as the Council of Trent cuts off from the communion of the Church all who profess the contrary error. To any believer in the Bible and in Christian Tradition there can be no logical doubt on this point. Christ said to St. Peter: "I will give to thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven . . . and *whatsoever* thou shalt loose upon earth, it shall be loosed also in heaven" (Mat. 16:19). By these words Christ conferred upon St. Peter the power of loosing every spiritual chain, but the temporal punishment due to sin is certainly a spiritual chain. Therefore who will deny that in the above words of the Saviour the power of loosing it is included. To St. Peter power was given of removing any obstacle preventing entrance to the kingdom of heaven, but as long as the temporal punishment due to sins is not removed, it constitutes a real impediment to entering heaven; therefore St. Peter and his successors must have the power to remove it. This power can be exercised out of the Sacrament of Penance; because it is evident that

there is nothing in the words of Christ whereby this power is restricted to the Sacrament.

Besides this so clear testimony of Holy Scripture, we have in our favor the whole Christian Tradition. The great Apostle of the Gentiles was perhaps the first to make use of this power. He excommunicated the incestuous Corinthian, and delivered him to Satan for the destruction of his flesh, that his spirit might be saved (1 Cor. 5:4, 5). In a little over a year, he remitted the penance which he had imposed upon him, whatever that penance may have been. In his second Epistle to the Corinthians (2:6) he writes: "To him this rebuke is sufficient, that is given by many, so that contrariwise you should rather pardon and comfort him . . . For what I have pardoned for your sakes, have I done it in the Person of Christ." There is no question here of sacramental absolution; St. Paul was not present, but he used the power of remitting temporal punishment due to the Corinthian's sin; in other words, St. Paul then did what the Pope now does, when he proclaims an indulgence.

The early councils of the Church, such as the Council of Ancyra held in 315 and that of Laodicea in 370, clearly explain the belief of the primitive Church in this point. After the seventh century we find numerous ecclesiastical punishments commuted into other pious works of charity or mortification; this was especially done on the occasion of Church dedications.

We have besides prescription in our favor. No beginning can be assigned to either the granting or gaining of indulgences; therefore we must suppose and believe that it was introduced by the Apostles themselves.

Indulgences free the soul from the debt of punishment, not only before the Church, but also before God. St. Thomas proves it by the following conclusive argument: "If the Church granted such indulgences, valid only for herself and not before Almighty God, she would rather damage than help, because she would send the soul to the more severe pains of purgatory by remitting the penances imposed." Yet we are to believe, as an article of faith, that the use of indulgences is salutary to the Christian people. Consequently, they must free the soul from the debt of temporal punishment also before God.

232. Q. Is an Indulgence a pardon of sin, or a license to commit sin?

A. An Indulgence is not a pardon of sin, nor a license to commit sin, and one who is in a state of mortal sin cannot gain an Indulgence.

Some propositions of Luther on the subject of indulgences, condemned by Pope Leo X., May 16, 1520, show the leader's views are those of his followers. 1, The treasure of the Church, whence the Pope grants indulgences, are not the merits of Christ and of the saints. 2, Indulgences are pious frauds of the faithful, they are of the number of those, which are permissible, and not of those which are expedient. 3, Those who believe that indulgences are salutary and useful to the spirit, are misled. The disciples have improved on the teaching of their master, and claim now that indulgences are a pardon of sin or rather a license to commit sin. This proposition is so absurd, and the contrary so well known to every Catholic child, that the assertion is a wonder of audacity. In the preceding question we have seen that an indulgence is far from being a pardon of sin; a person in the state of mortal sin cannot gain an indulgence for himself. Mortal sin is always accompanied with the debt of eternal punishment; both must be remitted together.

It would be unreasonable to think that there could be a remission of the temporal punishment, whilst the eternal punishment remains due. An indulgence cannot, therefore, be the pardon of mortal sin. It is still more absurd to think that indulgence means license to commit sin. An assertion like this sounds supremely ridiculous and offensive to the ears of a Catholic. Yet it is the view a vast number of outsiders take of indulgences and also of confession. Although a thousand times refuted, it is all the same brought forward as Gospel truth. Whoever understands the nature of an indulgence, sees at a glance that it is not a license to commit sin. Unless we know the nature of a thing, it is unreasonable to volunteer any assertions about it. All the requirements for an indulgence tend of their nature to prevent sin. Prayer, mortification, confession and Communion, all aim at the destruction of sin. The accusation hurled at us is exactly the reverse of the truth. We confess our sins and gain indulgences to pay the temporal punish-

ment due to them, not for the purpose of beginning it all over again, but to lead more spiritual lives, and to enable us to avoid sin.

It may not be out of place to point out the reasons why indulgences are a salutary practice among the people. 1, As Christ gave to Peter the power to grant them, it must be in keeping with the wish of Christ for the faithful to gain them. 2, It is salutary and useful to be freed from punishments and impediments, which retard the acquisition or enjoyment of the highest good. Unless we pay off our debts in this world by good works or indulgences, there will be a long delay in the other before we can attain the end of our creation. 3, The use of indulgences gives us a higher regard for the infinite treasure of the merits of Christ. 4, The use of indulgences beautifully illustrates the communion of Saints. The infinite merits of Christ, the head of His mystical body, and the superabundant merits of the saints, our brethren in the faith and members of the same body, are applied by indulgences to the needy members of the body in the Church militant on earth, or in the suffering Church in Purgatory. 5, It promotes the moral good of man; it helps us in the practice of other virtues and in bringing about a thorough reformation of our vicious habits; as is noticeable in every Catholic parish, especially on the occasion of a Jubilee.

233. *Q. How many kinds of Indulgences are there?*
A. There are two kinds of Indulgences, Plenary and Partial.

Theologians distinguish indulgences into more kinds than are here given by the Catechism. 1, By reason of the object to which the indulgence is attached, it is personal, local or real; as it may be granted to persons, such as a confraternity, or to a certain place, such as a particular church or the altar of a particular saint; or to a thing such as rosaries, pictures, medals, etc. 2, Considering the effects as produced by indulgences, we have the two kinds as here given by the Catechism. 3, By reason of the time for which it is granted it may be applicable only to the living or to the dead. The first is granted by way of an absolution, by which the Church directly takes away the debt of punishment; the second not by way of absolution, as the dead are no longer subject to the jurisdiction of the Church, but of suffrage, that is, by

offering from the treasury of the Church a sufficient atonement for the punishment still due by the faithful departed, with the request that Almighty God, in His mercy, may accept and apply it to the souls in purgatory. This difference may be illustrated by the following example. Supposing the President desires to set free two prisoners, one detained in a prison within the limits of the United States, the other in a foreign country.

How will he pardon them? He will pardon the first by virtue of his own and supreme authority conferred on him in his official capacity; he will merely send directly an order to release said prisoner. But he cannot free the other in the same way, because he has no authority outside of the limits of his country. He can use his good services only in behalf of the prisoner and eventually, owing to the friendly relations between the two nations, possess influence enough to obtain his release. So it is with the indulgences for the living and the dead. The living the Church sets free by virtue of the unlimited authority granted to her by her Founder, when He spoke the memorable words: "Whatsoever thou shalt loose upon earth, it shall be loosed also in heaven." For the poor souls she pays the price of their ransom and she doubts not its acceptance on the part of Christ, their heavenly Bridegroom.

234. *Q. What is a Plenary Indulgence?*

A. A Plenary Indulgence is the full remission of the temporal punishment due to sin.

A plenary indulgence is not only the remission of all punishment, which the ancient canons of the Church would have imposed, but also of all temporal punishment due to sins, the guilt and eternal punishment of which have already been forgiven. Theologians therefore teach that, if we were to die immediately after actually gaining a plenary indulgence, we should go straight to heaven. The same may be said of the holy souls in purgatory, whenever in suffrage for them we gain a plenary indulgence applicable to them, provided Divine Justice deigns to accept it in their behalf. But it may be seldom that a plenary indulgence is applied to us in its fulness, because we, probably, seldom have the requisite dispositions, hence it frequently happens that a plenary indulgence, owing to some defect on our part, becomes a partial indulgence.

There is only an accidental difference between a plenary indulgence and the indulgence of the Jubilee. This is, in fact, a sort of plenary indulgence, which is granted by the Pope with unusual solemnity and carries with it various privileges. The Jubilee dates back so far, that it would hardly be possible to say with certainty, when the first one was proclaimed. We may, therefore, to its antiquity apply the well-known rule of St. Augustine: "We may very rightly believe that what the universal Church holds and has not been instituted by Councils, but has always been held, has been handed down by Apostolic authority." An ordinary jubilee is now proclaimed every twenty-fifth year. Sometimes out of the regular time an extraordinary jubilee is also granted by the Sovereign Pontiff. To encourage the faithful to visit the shrines of the Apostles in Rome, most indulgences are suspended during the year of the Jubilee. During the year of the Jubilee extraordinary faculties are also granted to confessors.

235. *Q. What is a Partial Indulgence?*

A. A Partial Indulgence is the remission of a part of the temporal punishment due to sin.

When the Church uses with restriction the power given her of remitting the temporal punishment due to sin, after sin itself has been forgiven, and when she forgives or remits only a part of that temporal punishment, the indulgence is called partial. A partial indulgence may actually become a plenary indulgence, when it suffices to remit all the temporal punishment still due. If one year were due, an indulgence of one year would fully atone for it. A partial indulgence of forty days, of seven years, etc., means the remission of the temporal punishment due to sins already forgiven, corresponding to the forty days, or seven years, as were imposed by the ancient canons of the Church for certain sins. In the beginning the Church imposed on sinners long and rigorous penances. For instance, for doing servile work on Sundays and Holidays a penance of three days' fasting on bread and water was imposed; for speaking in church during divine service, ten days were given. For adultery the Church imposed a penance of seven or ten years; for incest, twelve years. Revolt against temporal or spiritual authorities was punished by a life-long penance. One guilty of homicide was for all his life during divine

service to remain at the door of the church, and could receive Holy Communion only when in danger of death. Such were some of the penances imposed in the primitive Church; our sins now deserve punishment just as much as the same sins did in those days of religious fervor. It does not follow that, because the same is not imposed now, that it would be more than our sins merit. An indulgence remits those canonical penances, and gives us what they were intended by the Church to give us. This will lead us to understand rightly what a partial indulgence of forty days, or of seven years actually means. An indulgence of forty days is the remission of that punishment which we would have had to undergo according to the ancient regulations, for forty days, and the remission of the pains of purgatory, which could have been redeemed before God by that penance of forty days. Sometimes the Pope grants an indulgence of seven years and seven quarantines; the seven years apply to the time of the primitive penances, and the quarantines correspond to the special penance of fasting imposed together with other penances.

The gaining of indulgences does not dispense us, however, from doing penance, as penance is a universal obligation imposed on all men without exception, and as it is necessary to follow in the footsteps of Christ and of the saints, whose lives were a continual penance.

236. *Q. How does the Church by means of Indulgences remit the temporal punishment due to sin?*

A. The Church by means of Indulgences remits the temporal punishment due to sin by applying to us the merits of Jesus Christ, and the superabundant satisfactions of the Blessed Virgin Mary and of the saints; which merits and satisfactions are its spiritual treasury.

We have proved already that in the unlimited power of forgiving and retaining sins is also contained the power of granting indulgences. An indulgence is the applying of the merits of Christ and of His Church to those members of the mystical body who are in need of them. These merits constitute the treasury of the Church, the dispensing of which has been entrusted to her. This treasury is made up first and essentially from the superabundant merits of Christ, and, in the second place, and accidentally, from the superabundant satisfactions of the Blessed Mother and of

the saints. All good works have the efficacy of meriting, of obtaining favors, and also of satisfying for shortcomings. The first, that of meriting life eternal is personal and inalienable; the other two may be applied to some one else. This may be illustrated by the following example: A son, dear to his father and who shows himself especially dutiful when his father needs his services, thereby merits the following favors: 1, He becomes dearer to his father; 2, In view of his acts he is able to obtain his father's forgiveness for an offending brother; 3, And also he can induce him to remit the punishment due to the offender. Such are the effects of an indulgence, the first personal, the other two may tend to alleviate the needs of others. The merits of Christ and of His saints are reserved for the benefit of the needy members of the same mystical body. It is not hard to prove the correctness of the above assertions. 1, To prove that there is such a treasure, we need only convince ourselves of the fact that the Church has the power to grant indulgences, that is, to apply the merits of others to pay the debts of her children. This could not be unless there is such a treasure. As the premises are an article of faith, it would be rash and almost heretical to deny the consequence.

2. That this treasury is made up first and foremost of the merits and satisfactions of Christ is equally clear. Christ paid more for the redemption of the world than was actually necessary. The price paid over and above is entrusted to the Church for the good of men and can never be exhausted by paying from it their spiritual debts, because the price is infinite. This price constitutes essentially the treasury from which the Church draws.

3. The dogma of the communion of saints, by which we believe that the members of the Church commune among themselves in spiritual goods, as do the members of an organic body, teaches us that the treasury of the Church is also secondarily made up of the satisfactions of the saints. It is evident that by satisfactory works they atoned for more than their sins demanded. These merits cannot be lost, as works of satisfaction and impetration they must benefit somebody; therefore since the saints do not need them, they are left to their brethren in the faith, to their fellow-members, to be applied by the Mother of all, the Church of Christ, to the members militant and suffering.

The Church may apply these satisfactions to the living or to the souls in purgatory; there is, however, a difference in the certainty of acceptance on the part of God when applied to the living or the dead. The Church has no jurisdiction over the dead; she can only pay the debt and ask God to accept it. The dogma of the communion of saints, the authority of the Roman Pontiffs, one of whom, Sixtus IV, condemned in 1479 the following proposition of Peter de Osma: "The Roman Pontiff cannot remit the pains of purgatory," and the universal belief and practice of the Church are sufficient guarantee that God deigns to accept the application made by His Spouse.

237. *Q. What must we do to gain an Indulgence?*
A. To gain an Indulgence we must be in the state of grace and perform the works enjoined.

This question may be divided into two points: 1, What must we do to gain an indulgence for ourselves: 2, What must we do to gain an indulgence for the souls in Purgatory.

To gain an indulgence for ourselves we must, 1st, be in the state of grace, at the moment when the last work enjoined is performed; 2nd, have the intention to gain the indulgence; 3rd, perform the works enjoined.

The reason of the first requisite is that temporal punishment cannot be remitted pending the guilt of mortal sin and the debt of eternal punishment. To share in the benefits of an indulgence, we must acquire the state of grace at least at the moment that the last requisite work is performed, because then only does an indulgence produce its effect. This is conformable to the teaching of Pope Benedict XIV in his Constitution dated 3rd Dec. 1749.

That an intention of gaining the indulgence is required, is clear, because this benefit is granted not to the unwilling but to the willing. Therefore it is advisable often, rather every day, to renew the intention of gaining all the indulgences we can by the works we perform.

We must perform the works enjoined, because they are a necessary condition; the indulgence is granted for the whole work.

The question may be asked, whether a venial sin is an obstacle to the gaining of a plenary indulgence? The answer to this is that, as long as we have upon our souls the guilt of a venial sin, so long also the temporal punishment

due to that sin cannot be forgiven, and therefore a plenary indulgence in that case cannot be fully gained. But it does not prevent the gaining of it for all other temporal punishments, except that due for the unforgiven venial sin, because the Pope is supposed to grant a plenary indulgence according to the capacity of the subject, and to remit by it as much as can be remitted. If this were not so, a partial indulgence would be preferable to a plenary indulgence, but this is absurd.

To gain an indulgence for the souls in purgatory at least two conditions are required: 1, In as far as the indulgence itself is concerned, it must be applicable by Pontifical concession to the souls in purgatory. Indulgences, as St. Thomas says, are just what those in charge of the Church treasury make them; by private authority no application can be made to any other except those mentioned in the concession. 2, The gainer of an indulgence must have an explicit or implicit intention of applying them to the souls in purgatory; to all in general or to one or more in particular. Theologians are divided on the question whether the state of grace is necessary to gain an indulgence for the souls in purgatory; Rome has so far not decided the question.

If an indulgence is granted under the condition of performing certain works, the indulgence cannot be gained, unless those works are performed. For most plenary indulgences confession is made a condition. This confession may be made on the eve of the day on which the indulgence is to be gained. By a special indult, the faithful who are wont to go to confession every week, unless lawfully prevented, may by their ordinary confession gain all the indulgences for which confession is prescribed. In some dioceses, by special dispensation, a semi-monthly confession is sufficient. We add a few remarks in regard to some particular indulgences best known by the faithful and to the conditions required to gain them.

1. *Stations of the Cross.* To these are attached the same indulgences as could be gained by visiting personally the Stations of the Way of the Cross in Jerusalem. Besides the canonical erection and the fourteen wooden crosses duly blessed, it is also necessary that we move, at least when making them privately, from one station to another, and meditate on the Passion of our Lord.

2. *Rosaries.* They may be of iron, lead, solid crystal, etc. They must be blessed; once blessed they cannot be sold any more. After one uses a rosary blessed for himself with the intention of gaining the indulgences, it cannot be given to another without losing the indulgences. The crosier beads have the most indulgences attached to them. An indulgence of 500 days is granted for *every Pater* or *Ave* said on a Rosary blessed by the Crosier Fathers or by a priest having the same faculty. For the gaining of the indulgences granted to the rosary of St. Dominic, some meditation of the mysteries is necessary.

3. *Scapulars.* They must be exclusively made of wool; a different color is prescribed for each of the different scapulars, the form must be oblong or square. One part must be on the back, the other in front. They must be blessed and imposed by a priest duly authorized. For the scapular of Mount Carmel, it is sufficient that the first one worn be blessed.

LESSON TWENTY-SECOND

ON THE HOLY EUCHARIST

238. *Q. What is the Holy Eucharist?*

A. The Holy Eucharist is the Sacrament which contains the body and blood, soul and divinity, of our Lord Jesus Christ under the appearances of bread and wine.

Protestants of all shades reject the Catholic definition of the Holy Eucharist. Most of them have preserved a sort of Eucharistic rite, which they call the Lord's Supper, but they all deny the substance of the Sacrament, that is, the real presence; they cling to the shadow, while rejecting the reality.

The Holy Eucharist, considered as a Sacrament, is the Sacrament of the body and blood of Christ under the appearances of bread and wine, instituted by Christ for the spiritual nourishment of the faithful. The essential parts of this Sacrament are the body and blood of Christ and the appearances of bread and wine.

Eucharist, from two Greek words means good grace or thanksgiving, and it is so indeed not only because Christ thanked His Father when instituting it, but also because it contains the source itself of all graces. By it we can give to God a worthy thanksgiving, and it fills also our souls with the dispositions required, that we may ever be thankful. The Holy Eucharist is, however, known by various other names in Scripture, as well as in the writings of the Fathers. In Holy Scripture the name Eucharist is not to be found, we admit, but as we shall see in this lesson, nothing can be more clearly proved from Scripture than that which is meant by it. We add here the different names given to the Holy Eucharist.

1. By reason of its commemorative meaning, it is called *Host,* to express the Passion of Christ, who was the host or victim for our sins.

2. By reason of its demonstrative meaning, it is called

Communion, to denote the union of the members of the Church among themselves and with their Head, Christ.

3. By reason of its prognostic meaning, it is called *Viaticum* to express the fatherland and the enjoyment of God, of which it is a sure pledge. It is so called especially when received by those in danger of death.

4. By reason of the transient matter of the appearances, and of the form of consecration, it is called *bread,* the *breaking of the bread,* the *bread of angels,* the *chalice of benediction.*

5. By reason of what is contained under the sacramental species, it is called the *bread of life, food, medicine and beverage of immortality, the Most Holy, the Mystery, the Venerable, the Sacrament, the Sacrament of love.*

6. By reason of the manner of its reception, it is called, *the table,* the *divine* or *Sacred Banquet.*

7. By reason of the time at which it was instituted, it is called the *Lord's Supper.*

8. By reason of the place where this wonder is performed, it is called the *Sacrament of the Altar.*

The Holy Eucharist is truly and indeed a Sacrament, because it has the necessary elements of a Sacrament. First, there is a visible sign, because it is performed with a visible rite and remains under the appearances of bread and wine. Secondly, there is an efficacious promise of grace, for Christ said: "He that eateth this bread shall live forever," (John 6:59). Finally, this rite was instituted by Christ to last permanently unto the end of time, as will be clearly explained in the following questions.

The Holy Eucharist differs from the other Sacraments in various ways: 1, The other Sacraments have the power to give grace; the Holy Eucharist contains the author and source of all grace. 2, The other Sacraments are only of a transient nature, the Holy Eucharist remains as a Sacrament. 3, In the Holy Eucharist alone there is a change of one substance into another. 4. The realization of the Holy Eucharist as a Sacrament also includes the offering of a sacrifice.

Although for the confection of the Holy Eucharist materially and physically there is a twofold matter and form, and although after its confection two visible signs remain, the appearance of bread to signify the body of Christ, and the appearance of wine to signify His blood, yet they form-

ally constitute but one Sacrament, their signification and the end being identical. The whole is something perfect in itself, and consists of such parts as are ordained for the same end, the spiritual refection of man, bearing a resemblance to his corporal refection, for which bread and wine are intended.

The answers given by the Catechism to the following questions can be so clearly established, as not to leave any room for doubt. At the same time a consecrated Host is the embodiment of more wonders and mysteries than can be found anywhere in creation.

239. *Q. When did Christ institute the Holy Eucharist?*

A. Christ instituted the Holy Eucharist at the Last Supper, the night before He died.

St. Thomas gives the three following reasons why Christ very appropriately instituted the Holy Eucharist at the Last Supper, the same night in which He was betrayed. 1, Because it was proper that at a time when He would leave His Apostles without His bodily presence, He should then give Himself to them for their consolation in the sacramental species. 2, It was proper that at the approach of His passion and after due celebration of the mystery of the paschal lamb, which was the figure of His passion, He should then institute this new mystery, for the commemoration of that same passion; because without faith in the passion of Christ there could be no salvation, according to the words of the Apostle: "Whom God had proposed to be propitiation through faith in His blood" (Rom. 3:25). 3, The words and the actions of a friend before his death are more deeply engraved in the memory of the loved ones, whom he leaves. That supreme moment calls forth the most friendly affections, and these must needs leave a more permanent impression on our minds. In order therefore that the greatest of gifts, as a token of affection, might be better realized and more lastingly impressed on our minds, it was most appropriate that Christ should institute the Sacrament of His love at the Last Supper, the night before He died. It is an open question, however, as to the day on which the institution of the Holy Eucharist really took place. The Greek church uses leavened bread for sacramental purposes, and to justify this practice, the Greeks

claim that while the Jews ate the paschal lamb on Friday, Christ did so on Thursday, and anticipated by one day the paschal solemnity. The Latins, on the contrary claim that Christ celebrated the passion on the evening of the fourteenth day of the lunar month Nisan, that is, on Thursday evening when the Paschal solemnity really began, and was kept up on the fifteenth of the month, that is, on Friday when Christ was crucified. The question is not one of faith as the Church has never authoritatively solved it; yet the best arguments seem to be in favor of the practice of the Latin Church. Both leavened and unleavened bread are the proper matter for this Sacrament; but as Christ most probably instituted the Blessed Sacrament at a time, when nothing leavened was allowed in the houses, and, therefore, most probably used unleavened bread, the Latin Church prescribes in her liturgy the use of unleavened bread only.

In all probability Christ celebrated a threefold supper the day before He died. First, there was the legal supper, in which He partook of the paschal lamb with all the ceremonies prescribed in Exodus. The second was the usual supper, after which most probably followed the washing of the feet. The third was the Eucharistic supper. After washing the feet of His Apostles, He sat to table again, and then instituted the Holy Eucharist. Therefore, when we say that Christ instituted the Holy Eucharist at the Last Supper, that means, at the end of the Last Supper; as the Church sings in one of the beautiful hymns composed by St. Thomas in honor of the Blessed Sacrament.

240. *Q. Who were present when our Lord instituted the Holy Eucharist?*

A. When our Lord instituted the Holy Eucharist the twelve Apostles were present.

The correctness of this answer may be called into question, as it is not certain whether there were twelve or only eleven Apostles present at the institution of the Holy Eucharist. The doubt is regarding Judas. During the second or usual supper, after He had washed the feet of His twelve Apostles, Christ, being at table again, began speaking to them about one of them, who would betray Him. The eleven, although their conscience did not

reproach them with such a criminal design, trusted more to the veracity of the Master, than to the testimony of their conscience, and began asking: "Who is it?" Judas even, not having been pointed out by the Master as the traitor, repeated the question. The beloved disciple at the request of Peter put the same question and Jesus answered: "He it is to whom I shall reach bread dipped" (John 14:25). St. John immediately adds that Jesus dipped the bread and gave it to Judas Iscariot. "The devil entered into Judas and Jesus said to him: That which thou dost, do quickly." Whilst the Apostles were wondering what this meant, Judas took the morsel, and went out immediately. This therefore throws a doubt as to whether Judas was present at the institution of the Holy Eucharist. Innocent III, before being raised to the Papal Chair, after expounding the arguments for both opinions, favors the negative, and several writers of great repute may be quoted for the same opinion. St. Thomas, with a host of other great writers, holds that Judas left the cenacle after he had, to his own condemnation, received the food of angels and committed the first sacrilege. The Church by repeating the words of St. Thomas, *With His hand He gave Himself as food to twelve* seems to favor the affirmative.

241. *Q. How did our Lord institute the Holy Eucharist?*

A. Our Lord instituted the Holy Eucharist by taking bread, blessing, breaking, and giving to His Apostles, saying: "Take ye and eat. This is My body"; and then by taking the cup of wine, blessing and giving it, saying to them: "Drink ye all of this. This is My blood which shall be shed for the remission of sins. Do this for a commemoration of Me."

Holy Scripture records five different actions of our Lord at the consecration of the bread into His own body. First, He took bread, secondly, He thanked His Father, thirdly, He blessed the bread; fourthly, He broke it and fifthly, He gave it to His Apostles. And yet Protestants claim that ceremonies accompanying the celebration of our mysteries are Papal inventions. Christ by His example taught us a few of them, and most of the others date

back to the first ages of the Church, and all have their special meaning. In the following question we will prove from the words here quoted by the Catechism the real presence of our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament. Judging from the words of the Bible, we conclude that Christ took in His hands one bread, and after breaking it into twelve parts gave one to each of the Apostles, who took it into their hands, and communicated themselves. This seems even to have been the practice in the primitive Church. It is only afterwards that, to avoid want of respect the sacred Host was put by the priest on the recipient's tongue. The Apostles were not astonished at what they saw and heard; they had been prepared to receive it as the realization of a promise, which had been made to them before (John 6). After Christ had thanked His Father, at the same time, raising His eyes to heaven, He blessed the bread probably by making the sign of the cross over it, as the priest does at Mass, and whilst giving it to His Apostles, He said: "Take ye and eat; This is My body." Some Catholic writers think that Christ did not immediately after that consecrate the wine in the chalice, that various actions and words may have gone between the two consecrations. It is, however, far more probable that the consecration of the wine followed immediately upon the consecration of bread, chiefly because the nature of the Sacrifice and Sacrament of the Holy Eucharist required that it should not be divided or interrupted. The sacrifice demands both consecrations. After thanking His heavenly Father again and blessing the cup, He gave it to His Apostles. Cornelius a Lapide, in his famous Commentary on the Gospels, claims that Christ after consecrating the bread into His own body, divided it into thirteen parts and partook of it Himself, and so also of the chalice. Christ then passed the chalice around to the Apostles. Luther and others endeavor to prove from this, that the laity also should receive under both appearances, that the chalice also should be given them. But such a conclusion does not follow from the premises. Christ and the Apostles only were present at the Last Supper; He there and then made them priests, and commanded them to consecrate, as He had done, under both kinds, and to receive under both. The same command does not apply to those who are not priests, nor even to priests, who do not consecrate. We

will explain in a following question, that he who receives under one kind, receives as much as under both, and that the Church has the right to limit the Communion of the faithful to one kind, and has done so for very good reasons.

242. *Q. What happened when our Lord said, This is My body; this is My blood?*

A. When our Lord said, *This is My body,* the substance of the bread was changed into the substance of His body; when He said, *This is My blood,* the substance of the wine was changed into the substance of His blood.

To make it doubly clear that the words spoken by our Lord at the Last Supper really bring about that wonderful change of the bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ, we must refer to the sixth chapter of St. John. Christ had made to His hearers a great promise, which, unless the words spoken at the Last Supper mean what the Catholic Church claims they do, Christ would have failed to keep. If Christ really promised to give His flesh to eat and His blood to drink, He must be really and substantially present in the Holy Eucharist. It is clear that Christ here speaks of some sort of bread, which is not faith, but His body and blood; it is also clear that He speaks of the real eating of this bread. I. Christ speaks of a bread, which is not faith, but His body and blood; (1) because he speaks of a new food He would give in the future; now faith was nothing new, it belonged to all ages, and was in that very moment demanded of the minds of His hearers. (2) He promised that this new bread would be like the manna, which rained in the desert; now the ancient manna was a true and visible food; therefore, the new must be so likewise. (3) Christ continually distinguished food from drink; there was no need of making such a distinction, if He intended to designate faith only by both. (4) If Christ, by giving His flesh to eat and His blood to drink, intended to commend faith, He used a metaphor which would horrify the Jews; it meant then the greatest insult to Himself. (5) The words of promise and the words of institution are virtually the same; the Apostles, therefore, at the Last Supper hearing the fulfilment of the promise, knew exactly what Christ meant;

they doubted not, neither did they put any questions.

II. The bread therefore that Christ was to give at some future time, was not faith; but on the contrary Christ intended to speak of a real eating of food; this is clear, (1) Because His hearers understood it so. They strove among themselves saying: "How can this Man give us His flesh to eat?" (2) That His words are to be understood in their literal meaning, is further clear from the emphasis He places on them, saying: "My flesh is meat indeed, and My blood is drink indeed." (3) To impress that belief more forcibly upon them, He appeals to something which, in their eyes was still more wonderful, and, as it were, said: "If you cannot believe this, what will you think then, when you will see the Son of man ascend where He was before?" (4) The circumstances and the nature of His saying clearly prove the same. If His words were not to be taken in their obvious and literal meaning, He would have led His hearers into a most pernicious error, and by all His following assertions comfirmed them in it. Many of His hearers were scandalized and left Him; instead of calling them back and giving them the Protestant version of His words, He asked the twelve Apostles: "Will you also go away?" The thought that Christ could have so deceived them is blasphemous. It was altogether opposed to His mission and to the nature of the question to leave such an assertion without any explanation, if it was not to be taken in its natural meaning. The words of promise conclusively prove that Christ spoke of a real eating, and that the fulfilment of the promise implied really and substantially the presence of His body and blood. The words used at the Last Supper mean nothing else than the fulfilling of His promise.

III. "This is My body," "This is My blood" must be understood in their literal and proper, and not in a metaphorical sense. Therefore by these words the substances of the bread and wine were changed by Christ into the substance of His body and the substance of His blood. There is nothing in His words which cannot be taken in its natural meaning, nothing that demands a metaphorical interpretation. According to the rules of interpretation, the words of Christ should be taken metaphorically, if the matter spoken of did not allow a literal meaning, or if the words insinuated a metaphor, or if in

common use His words meant obviously a metaphor. But none of these suppositions can stand, as is proved by the words of promise, and also because all the circumstances demand a literal meaning. (1) Considering the Person of Christ, His words must be understood in their literal meaning, even if they imply a miracle, provided that meaning be not unbecoming the Person of Christ. (2) Considering the circumstances of place and time, Christ was about to die, He made His will and established a new Covenant; this demanded the greatest simplicity and clearness in His words.

IV. It is surprising to see that in order to find in these words a figurative meaning, how much erudition has been wasted in a bad cause. A Lutheran writer, Schlussenberg, says: "The words of Christ are so clear that no angel from heaven, no man on earth could speak more clearly." And yet all Protestant denominations insist upon attaching to the words of Christ numberless distorted meanings, whilst denying always the only real one. Any other meaning than the literal is absurd. To grant any other would involve the conclusion, as a necessary consequence, that Christ had deceived the Apostles and through them the universal Church, because the literal meaning has always been held by the Church, and was never called into question, until the sixteenth century by the so-called reformers.

V. We may add the argument of prescription: This belief is the belief of the Catholic Church, therefore, it has always been held and must be Apostolic and divine. In the Church of Christ, not only has there never occurred such a change of belief, as implies the rankest idolatry, but there could not have been any such change. There is absolutely nothing to prove that any such change has occurred, but, on the contrary, all the monuments and documents of the Eastern and Western churches prove the contrary. That there could not have occurred any such a change in belief, is clear because it is impossible that so many and learned men, including the Apostles themselves, could have conspired to such ungodliness and fallen into such error.

We add a few words in explanation of the four words constituting the consecrating formula, "This is My body." *This* stands not for the bread, but what is contained under the appearance of bread; it was bread, but it is now the body of Christ. *Is* stands in all Protestant commentaries

for *signifies*, in the Catholic doctrine it stands for nothing else than the substantive verb. As a matter of fact, it cannot possibly stand for anything else; any other verb includes *is* and a predicate (signifies means is signifying) *is* cannot stand therefore for any other verb. *MY BODY*. Protestant commentaries explain this in various ways, all equally absurd, as is clear from the context. They interpret it by *Mystical body of Christ*; but it was not the mystical, but the real body which was given for us. Others interpret it as a sign of the body of Christ, but nowhere in Scripture is that meaning attached to this word. The words do not mean anything else than the body of Christ. If any of our adversaries were asked to embody the Catholic doctrine of the Eucharist into four words, could he do it any more clearly than Christ did when He said: *"This is My body?"*

243. *Q. Is Jesus Christ whole and entire both under the form of bread and under the form of wine?*

A. Jesus Christ is whole and entire both under the form of bread and under the form of wine.

Three Ecumenical Councils of the Church, of Constance, Florence and Trent, have declared the doctrine contained in this answer to be a dogma of faith. The Bible, however, proves abundantly that this is not an invention of theologians, but the revealed doctrine of Christ. To make the question clear, we must first refute an erroneous opinion, shared unknowingly by many Catholics. There may be many who think that by the words of Christ: "This is My body," the whole Christ is present under the appearance of bread; they understand by body a living body with soul and blood.

But this is contrary to the teaching of the Council of Trent. It says that by virtue of the words there is under the appearance of bread *only* His body; His soul, blood and divinity being present by concomitance. It also contradicts the mystery of the Holy Eucharist, because this is the representation of the death of Christ, and therefore under the appearance of bread is represented the body of Christ as separated from the blood. By virtue of the consecrating words there is under the appearance of bread only the body of Christ, but by concomitance there is also

His soul, blood and divinity. The following three arguments from Scripture will prove it.

1. "Every spirit that dissolveth Jesus is not of God," says St. John (1:4, 3), speaking against the heresy of Ebion, who dissolved Jesus by denying that He is God and man. But the words apply also to all those who dissolve the hypostatical union of God and man, Jesus, placing His body in one place apart from His soul, blood or divinity.

2. We have seen in the preceding question that the sixth chapter of St. John refers to the Holy Eucharist. Our Lord there says: "He that eateth Me, the same also shall live by Me." Now Christ cannot be eaten except under the appearance of bread, therefore under the appearance of bread must be the whole Christ; because if speaking of His body alone He would not say: "He that eateth *Me*."

3. The third argument we draw from three principles clearly laid down in the Bible. The first is that really and substantially the body of Christ is present in the Holy Eucharist, as we gather from the words: "This is My body." The second is that Christ after His resurrection lives and will die no more, as is evident from the teaching of St. Paul. From this we must logically infer that Christ's body in the Holy Eucharist is not without the soul and divinity. If the body was without soul and blood, it would be dead, and Christ dies no more. The third principle is that Christ is one divine Person in two natures. Hence it follows, that the body of Christ, wherever it is, cannot subsist but in the Person of Christ; as the humanity and divinity cannot be divided, it necessarily follows that where the body of Christ is, there also must His divinity be. Hence it is evident that Jesus Christ is whole and entire under each kind. The whole Christian Tradition, beginning with the testimony of the Apostle St. Andrew, preaching that doctrine from the cross to those around him, through all ages without a dissenting voice, is one and the same concerning this dogma of our faith. Very often has God proved by miracles that His blood is not separated from His body in the Holy Eucharist.

244. *Q. Did anything remain of the bread and wine, after their substance had been changed into the substance of the body and blood of our Lord?*

A. After the substance of the bread and wine had been changed into the substance of the body and blood of our Lord there remained only the appearances of bread and wine.

It is a dogma of our faith that the whole substance of bread and wine is changed into the substance of the body and blood of Christ, and that only the accidents, that is, the appearances, remain without their subject. This is one of the great and singular miracles involved in the mystery of the Holy Eucharist. The miracles which we know by faith to coexist with the Blessed Sacrament are chiefly: That, by a few words, a substance is changed into another; what appears does not really exist; a whole human body exists under the smallest appearance of bread; this same body is in many different places; the same body is on earth, hidden under another appearance, while at the same time it is gloriously revealed in heaven in its own appearance; and the accidents of bread and wine exist without their respective substances. Each miracle is, in some manner, more wonderful than the other. The most wonderful of all is perhaps the existence of accidents without their subject, or the substance, to which they adhere. Reason cannot prove that this is impossible, because the terms involved exceed the limits of human reason; reason, therefore, cannot show that there is any contradiction in those terms. Reason, without faith in other mysteries, cannot conclusively prove that it is possible. But admitting that God is omnipotent, reason must admit that God can do whatever does not imply self-contradiction, or non-entity.

Submitting then our intellect to faith teaching that the substance of bread and wine is changed into the body and blood of Christ, and that only their accidents, remain, we may safely draw the following conclusions: 1, Not only no integral part of the bread and wine remains, nor their substantial form, but 2, not even their *first matter*, which to exist must have a form, because if it were otherwise, the accidents would have a subject, that is, the first matter, and the body and blood of Christ would not be all that exists under the appearances of bread and wine, and the words of consecration would imply a falsehood. 3, It follows also that no substance or existence or anything individual or proper to bread remains, because all this

belongs to the substance, and that substance is there no more.

245. *Q. What do you mean by the appearances of bread and wine?*

A. By the appearances of bread and wine I mean the figure, the color, the taste, and whatever appears to the senses.

When treating of the sacramental species, the writers on Catholic dogma give very erudite and extensive distinctions and explanations; the Church allowing in this considerable latitude; there is also a great divergence of opinion. The Church has declared that what the Catechism calls appearances, and what might more properly be called accidents, remains after the substances of the bread and wine have been changed into the substance of the body and blood of Christ, and that these accidents remain without their subject. Accidents are entities which naturally exist not by themselves, but by another subject to which they adhere. So, for instance, colors do not naturally exist by themselves; they have existence only in another subject. The Church has never declared whether the sacred species are physical accidents, or merely appearing accidents. Theologians, like philosophers, when arguing on this question are divided. Some claim that the sensible accidents of a body are entities really distinct and separable from the corporeal substance in which they exist, so that it is not absolutely impossible for them to exist without that substance. Others claim that the sensible accidents of a body are nothing but the substance itself able to produce those representations or appearances. Others again propose an opinion midway between the two others. It is not our purpose to attempt to solve the question. As long as the Church has not spoken, we are at liberty to hold any of these opinions.

A more appropriate question may be: Why did Christ will to conceal Himself under the sacramental species? Considering the wisdom and the love of Christ, various reasons may be given why He chose to give Himself to us under the common appearances of food, rather than in His own. 1, To set us a perpetual example of humility, a virtue so hard for fallen nature to practise. What humiliation is comparable to His in the Sacrament of His

love? 2, To institute a sacramental rite filled with wonderful significations and symbols. 3, To institute at the same time a worthy sacrifice of the New Law. 4, To give us an opportunity of meriting more by the strength of our faith. 5, To prepare for us a convenient banquet of spiritual food. As people are not wont, says St. Thomas, but, on the contrary, feel an invincible repugnance, to eat the flesh of man and drink his blood, Christ gave us His body and blood under the appearances of bread and wine, articles of food commonly used by man.

246. *Q. What is this change of the bread and wine into the body and blood of our Lord called?*

A. This change of the bread and wine into the body and blood of our Lord is called Transubstantiation.

There are three imaginable ways in which Christ might make Himself present in the Blessed Sacrament of the altar, viz: by impanation, by consubstantiation, and by transubstantiation. The first two ways of viewing the real presence are heretical, the third is the true and Catholic doctrine.

The first view was taken by Osiander and a few others of Luther's followers. Impanation, according to them, meant the hypostatical union of Christ with the bread. According to them the union between Christ and bread was the same as that existing between the divinity and the humanity of Christ. Consubstantiation was the teaching of Luther. He supposed the body of Christ present along with the substance of bread, which remained. Transubstantiation is a word first used by theologians, and afterwards approved and confirmed by the Fourth Council of Lateran. It expresses most correctly the doctrine which the Holy Fathers had received from the Apostles and illustrated in their writings. Transubstantiation is that wonderful and singular change of the whole substance of bread into the body of Christ, and of the whole substance of wine into His blood, the appearances only of bread and wine remaining. In this definition there are two points of special importance. 1, The substance of the body of Christ succeeds to the whole substance of bread, the appearances of the latter remaining. 2, This succession takes place by a real change of the one into the other.

In every change there are two distinct terms, the thing which changes, and the thing into which it changes; the

change itself is the transition. The change may affect only the accidents of a thing; such a change would be from cold to warm water; the water is the same. A substantial change of a thing occurs when its substance loses or receives any essential quality; as when bread changes into the substance of our bodies, which are nourished by it. It is clear that the change which occurs in the Holy Eucharist is a substantial change, and, as is equally clear, it is of all changes the most wonderful, and for that reason the change is called *transubstantiation*. That the change is substantial, and that, therefore, it is properly so called, cannot be denied, if to the whole substance of bread succeeds the substance of the body of Christ; Scripture, Tradition, confirmed by a solid theological argument, prove this to be the case. The words of Christ: "This is My body, This is My blood" mean as we have shown above: All that is supporting these appearances or species, is My body and My blood. These words would not convey the true meaning, if anything substantial of the former being, bread or wine, were left. Tradition of both the Greek and Latin churches is unanimous on this point. From the above we form the following argument. Four things at most are required for a real substantial change, and they all are present in the Holy Eucharist. First, it is necessary that something ceases to be; in the Holy Eucharist the substance of bread ceases to be. Secondly, it is necessary that some substance begins to be; in the Blessed Sacrament the substance of the body and blood of Christ begins to be under the appearances of bread and wine. Thirdly, that there be something in common to both, which is in this case the appearances. Fourthly, it is required that there be a certain repugnance on the part of the two terms to exist together; that naturally the second term brings with it the expulsion of the other. From the Scriptural texts we have given, it is clear that the body and blood of Christ do not coexist with the substances of bread and wine.

We do not deny the possibility of this coexistence by miracle, but there is nothing to show that any such miracle does take place; everything on the contrary proves that it does not.

The Catholic word Transubstantiation, therefore, appropriately expresses this great mystery.

247. *Q. How was the substance of the bread and wine changed into the substance of the body and blood of Christ?*

A. The substance of the bread and wine was changed into the substance of the body and blood of Christ by His almighty power.

This change of bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ is so wonderful, that most heretics claim that it could not be the object of God's omnipotence. Starting from this assumption, they have endeavored to explain away the Scriptural texts bearing on the subject and expressly deny the clear meaning of Christ's words, basing their opinion on these three arguments: 1, That the same body cannot be in different places. 2, That a body cannot be somewhere without occupying space, and 3, That the accidents cannot remain without their substance. We claim that what is naturally impossible in these three points, is not impossible to God's omnipotence. To argue the question logically, we must first explain the rule by which we can know what is impossible absolutely and what is not so; in other words, what God can really do. Calvin claimed that God can do that which He wills. This is absurd, as God can do many things which He never wills to do. Christ said that God is able of these stones to raise up children to Abraham (Mat, 3:9). He can do so, but He never did, because He never willed it. Again others claim that God can do what man can conceive. Of course, He can, but the rule does not extend far enough, as God can do many things which man cannot conceive. To make it clear then to ourselves, what God can do, we must frame the rule from the objects themselves, and we say: God can do whatever can exist, or whatever is not a contradiction in itself; that which is a contradiction in itself is nothing; but the term of God's act cannot be nothing, for whenever He acts, He does something.

We shall now see, 1st, whether the same body can be in different places. Philosophy proves, abstraction made from Revelation, that this is not intrinsically impossible. But we will limit ourselves to Biblical proofs. Christ says: "With God all things are possible." In the Bible not a word will be found to except the question under consider-

ation. Why then except it, if we believe the Bible? In reading in the Acts of the Apostles the conversion of Saul, we must come to the conclusion that the one whom Paul saw and heard was at the same time, in heaven and there also present with him. Paul asked Him: "Who art Thou, Lord?" And He replied: "I am Jesus, whom thou persecutest." Who will deny then that our Lord was in two places? Why deny this when we admit so many other points harder or just as hard to admit, such as, the mystery of the Blessed Trinity, the resurrection of the dead, the union of body and soul, creation, eternity? What is, can be; therefore as there are examples of bilocation, it must be possible.

2. A body may be somewhere and not occupy space. Philosophy again proves that this assertion does not imply any intrinsic contradiction. The Bible gives us many proofs of bodies not occupying space. 1, Christ says: "It is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven" (Mat. 19:24). How could a camel pass through the eye of a needle by occupying space, and yet as is clear from the text, it is possible. 2, It said that Jesus came to the Apostles, the doors being closed, and repeated the visit the same way in eight days. 3, Christ arose from a closed sepulchre, an angel afterwards rolled the stone away, to show to the women an empty grave. More quotations from Scripture might be given, but the above are sufficient to show, that the objections raised against Transubstantiation do not present it as a contradiction in itself. Since then it is shown that it can be, we further conclude that it is, because God willed it, as is evident from the Scriptural proofs we have given of the real presence.

248. *Q. Does this change of bread and wine into the body and the blood of Christ continue to be made in the Church?*

A. This change of bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ continues to be made in the Church by Jesus Christ through the ministry of His priests.

The Sacraments are co-existent with the Church; the Church cannot be without them. Without them she would be deprived of the life-giving channels necessary to insure her existence. One Sacrament may be more necessary than

another for a particular recipient, but all are necessary to the Church, that she may work out her destiny, the salvation of man. That this change of bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ will continue to be made in His Church is clear from the words of Christ Himself. Before instituting the Holy Eucharist, Christ had promised it to His Apostles. In the words of promise there is nothing to show that the particular favor was to be limited to the Apostles or to His hearers at Capharnaum. On the contrary, many a divine utterance plainly shows that the wonderful gift was intended for all times. "If any man eat of this bread, he shall live forever. He that eateth My flesh and drinketh My blood, hath everlasting life. He that eateth My flesh and drinketh My blood, abideth in Me and I in him" (John 6:52, 55, 57). These oft-repeated promises would not have been kept, if the Holy Eucharist, by that wonderful change, were limited to any particular time. The Holy Eucharist is the life of the Church, the center of attraction, the focus into which all other acts of worship converge. If it were taken away, the whole edifice would crumble.

The principal minister of all the Sacraments is Christ, but He deigns to appoint subordinate ministers to continue in His name His work unto the end of time. As ministers of the Holy Eucharist, He limits His choice to the priests of His Church, as we will prove in the following question. According to the Protestant reformers, every baptized person is the lawful minister of all the Sacraments, the call of the community only being required for him to exercise the ministry. Catholic theology on the contrary teaches, that only certain persons determined by Christ's will are the lawful ministers.

249. *Q. When did Christ give His priests the power to change bread and wine into His body and blood?*

A. Christ gave His priests the power to change bread and wine into His body and blood, when He said to the Apostles, Do this in commemoration of Me.

In most Protestant denominations it is an admitted principle that by the ordination of a minister no character is imprinted in his soul and no new spiritual power is conferred on him. One may be a minister to-day and a layman to-morrow, if removed from office. The Church of

Christ, however, has received from the Apostles a different doctrine. It has always held and still holds that a real conferring of power is required; if no power were conferred, it would be absurd to imagine that what Christ did at the Last Supper could be repeated by man. But such power has really been conferred by Christ on the Apostles, and by them on their successors in the priesthood. Christ said to His Apostles only: "Do this in commemoration of Me," and by this command, He ordained them to the priesthood of the New Law. The following argument will convince us of it. The words: *Do this* signify not only: Eat and drink, but also consecrate, take and give to others as you have seen Me doing. The second part applies to the Apostles only. That this is so, is clear from the text itself. St. Luke does not say: "Take ye and eat," etc., but: "Taking bread, He gave thanks and brake, and gave to them saying: 'This is My body.'" Therefore St. Luke does not refer the words "Do this for a commemoration of Me" to the act of eating, as he does not mention it even; but he refers them evidently to what our Lord had really done. There is no reason why these words should not refer to all that Christ had done. Again if these words did not refer to all Christ had done, there would be no divine command of consecrating, and yet, as we have seen in the foregoing question, transubstantiation of bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ was to be continued in His Church. That this command applies to the few only is admitted practically by Catholics and Protestants alike; if it were not, it would lead to a natural consequence rejected by all, viz.: that all would be obliged to consecrate and distribute to others. The Church has always understood the words of Christ to mean exactly what they convey: viz.: Do all you have seen Me do: "Take bread, bless it, change it into My body and blood and distribute it to others." In this, as in many other points where Scripture does not express itself so clearly as to preclude the possibility of a misunderstanding, Christian Tradition is the best exponent. Only two of the Apostles present at the Last Supper recorded in writing the occurrences, and none of them recorded this divine mandate, constituting them priests of the New Law. They were commanded to hand down to their disciples by word of mouth the whole deposit of faith. The writings of some of these have come down to us, and

show what the teaching of the Apostles was. St. Denis the Areopagite, the disciple of St. Paul says: "No one can be a priest, unless he be promoted to that office by a Bishop." St. Ignatius, one of the successors of St. Peter in the see of Antioch, says that "the man would be worse than a heathen, who would dare to minister at the altar, if he be no bishop or priest." St. Clement says: "To the Apostles alone did Christ say: Do this for a commemoration of Me"; by the Apostles this power was further conferred on the priest.

To sum up: At the Last Supper Christ really changed bread and wine into His body and blood; He ate and gave to His Apostles, and then said: *Do this,* what else can it mean, but what Christ Himself had done? This power and command is given to them only, and through them to those who are called to the priesthood of the New Law.

250. *Q. How do the priests exercise this power of changing bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ?*

A. The priests exercise the power of changing bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ through the words of consecration in the Mass, which are the words of Christ: This is My body; this is My blood.

The exercise of the power of changing bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ constitutes the Sacrifice of Holy Mass, in its essential parts. The words of Christ repeated by the priest at the consecration in the Mass, are essential to operate that wonderful change. When treating of Baptism we explained that the Author of the Sacraments determined specifically the matter and form of the Holy Eucharist, designating bread and wine for the matter, and the words: "This is My body, This is My blood," for the form. The teaching of the Catholic Church has invariably been that these words only constitute the essential form. The schismatic Greek church believes that besides these some other prayers are also required to operate the change. Protestant denominations of all shades do not pretend to believe in transubstantiation; to them there is no Holy Eucharist as we understand it, and therefore the question we are arguing finds no place in their books on religious dogma. They have on this point gone a step further than their first founders. Luther could

not convince himself that the words of Christ, so clear and plain, admitted of any doubt. Some of the early reformers pretended that God consecrates by the mouth of the priest. According to Catholic teaching, consecration is also the work of man; hence he must be ordained to that work, and have the right intention. Catholics do not deny that consecration is the work of God through the ministry of His priests, but they claim that God uses the ministry of man, considered not as a machine, but as man, very much the same as rulers use the ministry of their ambassadors. We will now prove that the words of Christ are the real form, that by them alone bread and wine are changed into the body and blood of Christ.

1. This is proved by the example of Christ and of the Apostles. When our Lord instituted this Sacrament, He did not order any other prayer, nor any sermon. In the same way the Apostles, when they consecrated, before the gospels and epistles were written, did not read or recite anything else than perhaps some Psalms or the Lord's Prayer. Besides Our Lord did not pronounce these words historically, but expressively of their obvious meaning. Protestants, then, who pronounce them historically and add reading and sermon, as constituting the ceremony of the Lord's Supper, follow their own fancy, not the rite of institution by Christ. The Greeks also, by claiming certain prayers as essential, deviate from the example of Christ. The Catholic Church alone follows consistently the example set by Christ.

2. The continuous teaching of the Church and of the Fathers confirms this doctrine. Tertullian in his book against Marcion distinctly says, that Christ changed the bread He had in His hands by saying: "This is My body." St. Chrysostom says: "As the words which Christ spoke are the same as uttered now by the priests, so also is the offering the same." In an important matter like this there should be no essential change. Christ would have proved untrue to His promises, if the words of consecration did not operate the same effect. His Church would have fallen into the basest idolatry, if by doing what He commanded, no substantial change were effected. Far be from us such a thought.

LESSON TWENTY-THIRD

ON THE ENDS FOR WHICH THE HOLY EUCHARIST WAS INSTITUTED

251. *Q. Why did Christ institute the Holy Eucharist?*

A. Christ instituted the Holy Eucharist:

1. To unite us to Himself and to nourish our soul with His divine life.
2. To increase sanctifying grace and all virtues in our soul.
3. To lessen our evil inclinations.
4. To be a pledge of everlasting life.
5. To fit our bodies for a glorious resurrection.
6. To continue the sacrifice of the Cross in His Church.

The Catechism does not give us all the reasons, why Christ instituted the Holy Eucharist. The reasons here given may be clearly deducted from the narrative of the Bible, as told us by various inspired writers, especially by St. John. Probably the chief end which Christ had in view was to institute a Sacrament, which would be a divine nourishment to the faithful, and whereby the Church could worthily honor God as He deserves to be honored. In the Holy Eucharist God is offered to God. As our homage, as that of mere servants and exiles, does not bear any proportion to that of which God is worthy, Christ made Himself the offering in the Holy Eucharist, that through Him, as a Victim in all equal to God, we might give to the divine Majesty a commensurate honor. As Christ's mission upon earth had for its first object, the honor of His Father, so we must suppose that the above is the primary reason of the institution of the Holy Eucharist.

We will now show that each of the reasons here given may be easily deducted from Scripture.

1. Christ said: "He that eateth My flesh and drinketh My blood, abideth in Me and I in him" (John 6:57). This abiding and union of the soul with Christ is really effected

by the Holy Eucharist, in which, though hidden, Christ enters into our body really as He is. By it Christ is united with us, and we are united with the body and blood of Christ, and consequently we are really united to His person, His divinity, His omnipotence, as corporal food is really united with our bodies. St. Cyril beautifully illustrates this wonderful union in the following words: "As by melting two candles in the same receptacle, both are entirely mixed, so also when we receive the body and blood of Christ, we are so united to Him, that Christ is in us and we in Christ." In virtue of that union we become Christ-bearers, blood relations of Christ. As long as the Sacramental species exist within us, Christ is substantially present in us; as soon as they cease to exist, Christ is no longer substantially in us. However through previous union and contact with us the spiritual life of our soul is nourished and strengthened. In the Holy Eucharist He communicates to the soul His own supernatural life. This union of the soul with Christ, in virtue of the Holy Eucharist, is not of a mere transitory nature, because Christ says that He who eats His flesh and drinks His blood abides in Him.

2. By the Holy Eucharist, when worthily received, the soul must naturally become more pleasing in the sight of God. The increase of sanctifying grace is accompanied by an increase of all virtues, because it is by these that the soul is made pleasing to God. This applies also to the other Sacraments that increase sanctifying grace; but with greater reason to the Holy Eucharist. First, because in it we receive the Author of grace Himself. Secondly, because in it Christ gives us the opportunity to practise most of the virtues and helps us by His real presence to practise them. Faith, for we believe that a true God and man is invisibly, though really and substantially, present under the appearance of a small Host. Hope, because, whilst we believe that Christ gives Himself, we firmly hope all other desirable favors, which are so much less than Christ Himself. Charity, because the Holy Eucharist is the furnace of love enkindled by Christ, to induce us to love Him in return. Religion, because the Holy Eucharist represents the highest act of it. Humility, because we cheerfully sacrifice the testimony of our senses and submit them to the authority of Christ. Gratitude, because by the Holy Eucharist we give to God the noblest thanksgiving. Mortification, be-

cause we must be fasting, to receive the Holy Eucharist. And so on with the other virtues.

3. The lessening or weakening of our inclinations results from the foregoing. Feeding us with His own flesh and blood, and leading us to a divine life, Christ withdraws us from a carnal life, with its concupiscences and enjoyments, and enables us to say with St. Paul: "I live, now not I, but Christ liveth in me" (Gal. 2:20). The Holy Eucharist enables us to live, speak and act, as if, not we, but Christ lived, spoke and acted in us. As virtue increases, evil inclinations decrease, or are more easily overcome with the help of the special graces received in the Holy Eucharist.

4. Christ sufficiently expressed that the Holy Eucharist is intended to be a pledge of everlasting life, for He said: "He that eateth My flesh and drinketh My blood, hath everlasting life" (John 6:55). That is why the Church so often repeats the words of St. Thomas Aquinas: "O Holy Banquet, at which Christ is received, the memory of His passion is renewed, the soul is filled with grace, and a pledge of future glory is given us."

5. The fitting of our bodies for a glorious resurrection is a sequel of the foregoing. They are in the Gospel narrative linked together, for Christ said: "He that eateth My flesh and drinketh My blood hath everlasting life, and I will raise him up in the last day" (John 6:55). The council of Nice calls the Holy Eucharist, "the symbol of resurrection." St. Ignatius of Antioch calls it "the medicine of immortality." This must be understood, however, as meaning, not that by the Holy Eucharist a physical quality causing resurrection is conferred on the body, or a supernatural gift, which is not due to the soul sanctified, but that resurrection due to grace is given to the saints for another reason, which is the proper and special effect of the Holy Eucharist, viz.: on account of our special union with the glorified body of Christ through the Holy Eucharist, by virtue of its institution and the solemn promise of Christ. The Holy Eucharist is, therefore, the moral instrumental cause of our resurrection, not the physical. That is why Christ says: "I will raise him up," and not, the Eucharist will raise him up.

6. Christ instituted the Holy Eucharist also in order that, by His last testament, He might continue to the end of the world to keep vividly before the eyes of our mind the great

mystery of His life and passion, culminating in the sacrifice of the Cross. In the Holy Eucharist the bread and wine are consecrated separately into His body and blood to signify His passion. Christ said: "Do this for a commemoration of me;" and St. Paul adds: "As often as you shall eat this bread and drink the chalice, you shall show the death of the Lord, until He come" (1 Cor. 11:26). We shall afterwards see that the Holy Eucharist, considered as a Sacrifice, is substantially the same as the sacrifice of the Cross.

252. *Q. How are we united to Jesus Christ in the Holy Eucharist?*

A. We are united to Jesus Christ in the Holy Eucharist by means of Holy Communion.

253. *Q. What is Holy Communion?*

A. Holy Communion is the receiving of the body and blood of Christ.

By Holy Communion Jesus Christ becomes the food of our soul. No union could be more intimate. "He that eateth My flesh and drinketh My blood, abideth in Me and I in him" says Christ (John 6:57). St. Cyril of Alexandria attempts to explain this truly wonderful union by the following comparison: "When two pieces of wax are melted together, they become one; so also by partaking of the body and blood of Christ, He is in us and we are in Him. The faithful soul becomes one soul with Jesus Christ, and the body of the Christian becomes one body with Jesus Christ." Faith teaches us that the adorable Sacrament is Jesus Christ whole and entire; therefore receiving Holy Communion means receiving the body, blood, soul and divinity of our Lord Jesus Christ; the same body, that was nailed for us to the cross; the same blood, that was shed on Calvary to wipe out the sins of man; the same soul, that in the garden of olives was sorrowful unto death; the same divinity, that united itself on Annunciation day with human nature in the womb of the Blessed Virgin. How can that be, will an unbelieving world ask, clinging with unreasonable tenacity to the objection raised by the Jews 1900 years ago. "How can this Man give us His flesh to eat?" The objection was then answered by our Lord, who took occasion from the doubts expressed to elucidate this wonder-

ful doctrine clearer than any other dogma of our holy faith.

254. *Q. What is necessary to make a good Communion?*

A. To make a good Communion it is necessary to be in the state of sanctifying grace and to be fasting from midnight.

The Catechism here gives us the necessary dispositions for a worthy Communion. The first affects the soul, the other the body. To avoid a sacrilegious Communion we must be in the state of sanctifying grace; but to share in all the wonderful effects of this Sacrament other dispositions are also required. Besides sufficient instruction by which the recipient may discern the bread of Angels from material food, he must be reasonably sure that he is in the state of sanctifying grace. Generally speaking, if one has a mortal sin on his conscience, contrition would not be sufficient, but by a special precept of the Church, and perhaps of Christ Himself, he is obliged to go to confession. Accidentally, however, if there should be an obligation to communicate or to celebrate Mass, and no confessor could be had, contrition may be sufficient. This is the teaching of the Council of Trent, threatening with excommunication those who should dare teach or assert otherwise. The Council of Trent further teaches that when necessity obliges a priest to celebrate without previous confession, if he be in state of mortal sin, ecclesiastical law commands him to confess as soon as possible. If a penitent should inculpably, or at least without any grievous negligence, have forgotten to confess a mortal sin, he is probably not obliged to confess it, before going to Communion, because, on the one hand, he has complied with the precept of confessing, and on the other, his mortal sin has at least been indirectly forgiven. But he must confess it in his next confession. In case we have a doubt as to whether we are in the state of mortal sin or not, confession is strictly speaking not necessary, because the precept of the Apostle: "Let a man prove himself" (I Cor. 11:28), by virtue of which, as the Council of Trent declares, confession is commanded, applies only to those who are conscious of having committed a mortal sin, and have not confessed it. It is clear, however, that Com-

munion without a previous confession, when there is serious doubt, as to the state of our soul, is not to be recommended; on the contrary, in the case of doubt, it is advisable, generally speaking, first to go to confession. We say, generally speaking, because there is one class of penitents, the scrupulous, who must abide by the advice of their confessor and go to Communion, even when they are in doubt. If one is sure of having committed a mortal sin, and is in doubt whether he confessed it or not, confession may not strictly be necessary, but it is advisable to go and avoid future anxieties. It is the general opinion of theologians, that the precept to acquire the state of grace by confession in preparation for Holy Communion, is not a mere ecclesiastical, but a divine command; first, because St. Paul says, that he received it from the Lord; secondly, because ecclesiastical usage has declared it to exist, but has not introduced it; thirdly, because the Council of Trent would not excommunicate those who deny that obligation.

In the presence of this precept, it is quite plain that nothing but a serious necessity could justify a departure from it; such as, danger of death, integrity of the sacrifice, fear of profanation. Even in these cases, when there is no possibility of confession, contrition or at least attrition must precede, as otherwise the recipient of Holy Communion, would commit a sacrilege.

255. *Q. Does he who receives Communion in mortal sin receive the body and blood of Christ?*

A. He who receives Communion in mortal sin receives the body and blood of Christ, but does not receive His grace, and he commits a great sacrilege.

The answer given by the Catechism voices the teaching of St. Paul on the subject. "Whosoever shall eat this bread or drink the chalice of the Lord unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and of the blood of Christ. . . . He that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh judgment to himself, not discerning the body of the Lord." (I Cor. 11:27, 29).

Those, therefore, who receive Communion in mortal sin, receive indeed the body and blood of Christ, but, like Judas, to their own condemnation; they commit an awful sacrilege. The unworthy communicant seems more guilty than Judas

when he betrayed his Master and delivered Him to His enemies to be crucified, because an unworthy Communion is a more direct insult to the great God; it is direct murder on the part of the unworthy recipient. Christ is "the living bread which came down from heaven" (John 6:55); He gives Himself for the life of the world. The unworthy communicant kills this life, because he is the cause that its power dies within him, and that, instead of being a means of sanctification, it brings death to his soul. It is true that by each mortal sin we crucify the Son of God again to ourselves (Hebr. 6:6), by defacing the image of God impressed on our souls, but in an unworthy Communion we attack the Original, and drive Him into the dwelling of Satan, a heart stained by sin. Christ rebukes the deicide Judas for betraying his Master with a kiss. There was no need on his part to resort to an outward mark of affection for the purpose of betraying Him; he might have pointed Him out from a distance. No such hypocrisy was necessary. Far more contemptible however is the act of him, who invites the Master to his home to deliver Him up to Satan. The unworthy communicant insults Christ with greater hypocrisy than the Jews. These placed a crown of thorns on His head, and a reed in His hand, and kneeling down in derision they saluted Him: "Hail, King of the Jews" (Luke 22:48). The unworthy communicant bows his head, bends his knee, beats his breast, prays to Him with folded hands and all for the same purpose of mocking Him. Had the Jews known Him, they never would have nailed Him to the infamous gibbet (1 Cor. 2:8); the unworthy communicant cannot claim ignorance, and he nails Him to a far more infamous gibbet, by delivering his Guest to the powers of hell. Christ, in the first instance, suffered willingly, because He suffered to redeem the world; whereas now nothing but destruction results from the insults He is subjected to. Hell itself would be a fitter place for God than the heart of a sinner, says a great writer, because in hell He acts as judge and master of the justice of God, giving the criminals their dues, but in the heart of a sinner He is a prisoner in an abominable dungeon. It is, then, a most grievous sin to receive Holy Communion unworthily; it is a great sacrilege, because it is the desecration of the Holy of Holies. Therefore, we must entertain the deepest horror

of this crime, and prove ourselves before receiving the bread of Angels.

256. *Q. Is it enough to be free from mortal sin to receive plentifully the graces of Holy Communion?*

A. To receive plentifully the graces of Holy Communion it is not enough to be free from mortal sin, but we should be free from all affection to venial sin, and should make acts of lively faith, of firm hope, and ardent love.

Christ and Satan will always be opposing monarchs; the better we serve the one, the less we shall think of the other. Satan is the embodiment of sin: Christ hates sin with an eternal hatred. Sin in us means something hateful to Christ. This applies equally to venial sin. Christ necessarily hates it. Therefore the more numerous our sins, or the greater the attachment on our part to sin, the less room there is for the infusion of divine grace, and the superabundant effects of Holy Communion. Christ will fill our hearts with heavenly blessings in proportion as He finds them empty of all things earthly. The rule of sin is inconsistent with the rule of Christ. Venial sin, as it does not break God's friendship towards us, does not prevent the two primary effects of Holy Communion, the reception of sanctifying grace and sacramental grace. Attachment, however, to venial sins is a positive obstacle to a full share of the secondary effects of this Sacrament. One of these is the remission of venial sin. Almighty God cannot forgive a venial sin for which we are not sorry. Holy Communion is also intended to preserve us from mortal sin. But if there is a positive attachment to venial sin, it may not be long before we fall into mortal sin, for this is the natural consequence of venial sin. The union of Christ with the communicant cannot be as intimate, when the latter has no desire to give himself entirely to Christ. Besides there can be none of that spiritual sweetness otherwise conferred by the Sacrament. To receive therefore plentifully the graces of Holy Communion, we must be free from all affection to venial sin. Venial sins remaining in the soul only in as far as the stain and the temporal punishment due to them is concerned, are no obstacle, because one of the effects of this Sacrament is to remove them.

To effect this detachment from all things earthly, and as a near preparation to Holy Communion as well as to receive plentifully its graces, the Catechism recommends acts of lively faith, of firm hope and ardent charity.

If we were thoroughly impressed with the thought of the greatness of our Guest, we would spare no trouble to make our hearts as worthy a dwelling as it is possible for us to do; we would remove all that could offend His all-searching eye and adorn our hearts in a manner pleasing to Him.

To receive His favors plentifully, we must be desirous of them and ask Him without doubting, for He is the same God who promised to grant all requests, conducive to our real welfare. The very doubt in His mercy and kindness would be an insult. But above all, as this Sacrament is justly called the Sacrament of His love, our hearts should also be burning with the sincerest love towards Him. Love, and our protestation of it should not be meaningless words; they must not be merely on our lips, they must be the true expression of the sentiments of our hearts; as Christ gives Himself without any reserve to us, so also our love must admit of no restrictions, it must be strong enough to enable us to give our life for Him.

257. *Q. What is the fast necessary for Holy Communion?*

A. The fast necessary for Holy Communion is the abstaining from midnight from everything which is taken as food or drink.

When our Lord gave Holy Communion to His Apostles for the first time at the Last Supper, they were not fasting, for Christ instituted the Blessed Sacrament after they had partaken of the paschal lamb. Christ had special reasons for doing so. To our weak intellect the following impose themselves.

1. He desired to impress upon them most cogently the greatness of this mystery, and for that reason He instituted it last of all, that it might be all the more deeply engraved in their memory. 2, He willed that the ancient Pasch should come to an end, when the New One began. 3, He willed that the memorial of His Passion should be connected with the Passion itself. But he did not order that subse-

quently Holy Communion should be received in the same order; He left that to the Apostles and the Church to settle.

The Church prescribes that to receive Holy Communion we must be fasting, unless there be a very serious reason excusing from that obligation. This obligation binds under pain of mortal sin, because it was imposed for very grave reasons. St. Thomas gives the following: 1, Because the reverence due to the Holy Eucharist demanded it. 2, To show that Christ must occupy the first place in our hearts. 3, To prevent the consequences, following excess in eating or drinking. This precept forbids our approaching the Holy Table, if we have taken any food or drink after midnight. Midnight must be taken in its strict signification; the taking of food or drink a minute later would prevent our receiving Communion that day. According to a decision of the Sacred Penitentiary we may follow either the true or suntime, or the meantime. In various places the meantime is either ahead or behind suntime. We may take the most favorable; as also when watches or clocks in the house differ, unless we are certain that the slowest are wrong. This obligation demands certainty; in case, therefore, we doubt whether we have taken anything after midnight, we are not debarred from Holy Communion. To break the fast the following three conditions must materialize. 1, That something exterior, not within us, be swallowed; 2, That it be really food or drink; 3, That it be taken as food or drink. A cook, for instance, tasting of various dishes and spitting out immediately, would not offend against the first condition. Things altogether indigestible, such as glass or metal are not included in the second condition.

Smoking or chewing or snuffing is not forbidden, but it does not seem to be in keeping with the reverence due to the Holy Eucharist, and therefore it is advisable to abstain from the use of tobacco before receiving. Abuses at different times have called forth the severest censures; these have subsequently been rescinded, still leaving the impression that the Church insists that irreverence and scandal should be avoided. In case of doubt, whether the fast has been broken, it will be advisable, in order to avoid future anxieties, to consult one's confessor and abide by his decision.

258. *Q. Is any one ever allowed to receive Holy Communion when not fasting?*

A. Any one in danger of death is allowed to receive Communion when not fasting.

The Catechism here gives only one class of persons for whom fasting is not an obligation; there are, however, other cases when, for very serious reasons, the laws of the Church on this point are suspended. Theologians give us four cases when one not fasting may receive Holy Communion.

The first is danger of death, following from sickness, wounds or poison; or when death is the penalty for a crime, after a judgment rendered by the competent authority. Holy Communion may be given every day by way of Viaticum to a sick person, although not fasting, as long as the same danger of death actually perseveres.

The second is when reverence due to the Sacrament requires it. This may occur in the following instances. To prevent its profanation by enemies, to complete after consecration the sacrifice begun by another priest, who is unable to continue it; to complete the sacrifice begun by himself, when, after taking Communion, the priest remarks that one of the two species was essentially vitiated, for instance, that the bread used was not the bread absolutely required, or that the wine had changed into vinegar. There may be a few more instances of a like nature. Also to avoid danger of grave scandal or defamation of character. Lastly, when a newly-baptized Christian should desire to receive Holy Communion the day of his baptism, the salt given him during the administration of baptism would be no obstacle.

As to the sick who wish to receive Holy Communion, but cannot remain fasting, Pope Pius X approved two decrees of the Congregation of the Council. In the first, dated Dec. 7, 1906, permission is granted to the sick who have been laid up already a whole month, and have no certain hope of a speedy recovery, to receive Holy Communion after taking a drink (of medicine or other beverage,) with the consent of their confessor, once or twice a week, if they live in some pious Institution where the Blessed Sacrament is kept, or if they enjoy the privilege of having Mass celebrated in their domestic Oratory; and for others,

(who do not,) once or twice a month, provided the prescriptions of the Roman Ritual and of the Congregation of Rites be observed. The second decree dated March 25, 1907, extends the above privilege to those attacked by a serious complaint and unable to remain fasting, according to the physician's judgment, who still cannot lie in bed, or are able to be up only several hours every day.

259. *Q. When are we bound to receive Holy Communion?*

A. We are bound to receive Holy Communion, under pain of mortal sin, during the Easter time and when in danger of death.

By virtue of a divine, as well as of an ecclesiastical precept, all adults, after they have attained the use of reason, are obliged to receive Holy Communion, if they can reverently receive it. The divine command obliges under pain of mortal sin all adults, the faithful directly, the infidels indirectly, that is, the latter must first embrace the faith and then receive. The precept of the Church obliges only those who are baptized. This law was first enacted in the fourth Council of Lateran, and afterwards confirmed by the Council of Trent in the following words: "If any one deny that all and every one of the faithful of both sexes, after they have attained the use of reason, are bound to receive Holy Communion according to the command of our Holy Mother the Church, at least every year about Easter, let him be anathema." Neither the divine nor the ecclesiastical command obliges the faithful to receive under both kinds, as the Reformers of the sixteenth century would have us believe. The Council of Trent pronounces anathema on all those who dare assert it. The Reformers tried to prove the necessity of Communion under both kinds from the following words of Christ: "Unless you eat the flesh of the Son of man and drink His blood, you shall not have life in you" (John 6:54). The Fathers of Trent reply to the objection: "The one who uttered the foregoing words also said: 'If any one eat of this bread, he shall live forever.' Christ does not prescribe the manner of receiving: He only commands to receive His body and blood, contained equally under each kind." The Roman Catechism gives the following reasons why it is forbidden to give Holy Communion to the laity under both kinds. 1,

For fear of profanation, as the blood would be very apt to be spilled, especially when there are a great many communicants. 2, As the Holy Eucharist must always be kept for the sick, it is to be feared that, if the species of wine be kept long, it would turn sour. 3, That uniformity may be preserved in the great Sacrament of unity. There are many who cannot bear the smell or taste of wine, and others to whom drinking out of the same cup with others is repulsive. 4, In many countries and places it is hard to procure wine. 5, To contradict a double heresy, the one denying the Christ is whole and entire under each kind; the other condemning as sacrilegious a Communion under one species.

It is clear that, properly speaking, Communion is not of absolute necessity, like Baptism, because children dying after Baptism are certainly saved without receiving it. Morally speaking, however, as St. Thomas says, it is necessary to adults to preserve the spiritual life and, consequently, to persevere unto the end. We are bound to receive Holy Communion, as the Catechism says, during the Easter time. The command of Christ to receive sometimes is determined by the Church to a particular time, extending in this country from the first Sunday in Lent to Trinity Sunday. This will be explained more at length when treating the Commandments of the Church.

Christ commands us also to receive, when we are in danger of death; the great need we have of spiritual assistance in our last struggle, is one of the reasons why He instituted the Holy Eucharist. Danger of death does not only mean the moral danger arising from sickness, but also from any other cause, such as a very serious surgical operation to be undergone; some women who are always in danger, when in childbirth, sailors and soldiers before an almost certainly dangerous battle. Theologians discuss the question whether in danger of death Holy Communion may be given to children, lunatics, drunkards and criminals about to undergo the death-sentence.

Children in the early ages of Christianity were allowed to receive, even before they had attained the use of reason; this practice, which still prevails in the Greek Church, has been abolished for good reasons in the Latin Church. In the Latin Church therefore Communion cannot be given to children, even as Viaticum, before they have attained

the use of reason. Viaticum should be given to children after that age, even if they have not made their first Holy Communion, provided they can distinguish this spiritual food from any other.

Lunatics and idiots, if they never had the use of reason, are like little children and as such should not be given Holy Communion even when in danger of death. If they have had it, and afterwards lost it, and it is not beyond a doubt known that they lost it when they were in the state of mortal sin, they should receive it, if there is no danger of irreverence.

Deaf-mutes may receive, if they have been instructed; not otherwise, as they could not distinguish this spiritual food from any other; unless they know the sign language, or can read and write, there is no possibility of making them understand it.

Drunkards, that is, those who are actually and entirely under the influence of liquor, are so either culpably or not. If their drunkenness is certainly wilful, as it is supposed to be with the habitual drunkard, Viaticum may not be administered, because, as the Church sings, "the Bread of Angels is not to be given to dogs." To use the word of St. John Chrysostom: "The dog is nobler and the ass is better than the drunkard." If drunkenness combined with danger of death is unwilful or at least not certainly wilful, Viaticum may be given, if there is no danger of irreverence. Criminals about to undergo capital punishment, if otherwise well disposed, may certainly receive Holy Communion.

260. *Q. Is it well to receive Holy Communion often?*

A. It is well to receive Holy Communion often, as nothing is a greater aid to a holy life than often to receive the Author of all grace and the Source of all good.

The condemnation of the three following propositions by Popes Alexander VIII and Innocent XI explains the mind of the Church on that subject: "Sacrilegious are to be judged those who pretend to have a right to receive Communion before they have fully atoned for their sins." "Those also must be refused Holy Communion, in whom there is not yet a most pure love of God, free from all mixture." "Frequent confession and Communion is a mark of predestination even to those who live like heathen."

From this it will be seen that the Church selects a middle way, and that while imperfections are no bar to frequent Communion, the desire of a more Christian life is a necessary condition. In the primitive Church the faithful assisting at the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass used to receive even daily. Frequent Communion is recommended by the Church, as is clear from the teaching of the Fathers and Ecumenical Councils. "I recommend to receive every Sunday," says St. Augustine, "provided there is no desire of sin." The Fathers of the Council of Trent warn, exhort, pray and beseech that all Christians may so behave, that they may frequently receive that supernatural bread. From a decree of the Sacred Congregation of Rites, Dec. 2, 1885 we see that the practice of receiving frequently should be praised and promoted, according to the intention of the Council of Trent. The very nature of this Sacrament demands that it should be frequently received; because it is given as a spiritual food that it may produce in the soul the effects which the material food produces in the body. The frequent necessity of material food illustrates also the frequent necessity of that spiritual food. The manna in the desert was a figure of the Holy Eucharist; as it was daily given, so is also Holy Communion our daily bread. Owing, however, to the indisposition of the recipient, it may not be advisable for him to receive every day, as St. Thomas teaches. Hence it follows that, considering the Sacrament in itself, in its effects, the faithful should receive very frequently, and that considering the recipient, it should be more or less frequent according to his disposition. Not at all times has the same meaning been attached to frequent Communion nor even weekly Communion, although for even the most practical lay members of the Church this may be sufficient. Theologians lay down the general principle that monthly Communion is to be recommended to all, if they are well disposed.

The following is taken from the decree of the Congregation of the Council giving the present discipline of the Church with regard to daily Holy Communion.

1. Frequent and daily Communion, as a thing most earnestly desired by Christ Our Lord and by the Catholic Church, should be open to all the faithful, of whatever rank and condition of life; so that no one who is in the

state of grace, and who approaches the holy table with a right and devout intention, can lawfully be hindered therefrom.

2. A right intention consists in this: that he who approaches the holy table should do so, not out of routine, or vain glory, or human respect, but for the purpose of pleasing God, or being more closely united with Him by charity, and of seeking this divine remedy for his weakness and defects.

3. Although it is more expedient that those who communicate frequently or daily, should be free from venial sins, especially from such as are fully deliberate, and from an affection thereto, nevertheless it is sufficient that they be free from mortal sin, with the purpose of never sinning mortally in future; and, if they have this sincere purpose, it is impossible but that daily communicants should gradually emancipate themselves from even venial sins, and from all affection thereto.

4. But whereas the Sacraments of the New Law, though they take effect *ex opere operato,* nevertheless produce a greater effect in proportion as the dispositions of the recipient are better; therefore, care is to be taken that Holy Communion be preceded by serious preparation and followed by a suitable thanksgiving according to each one's strength, circumstances and duties.

5. That the practice of frequent and daily Communion may be carried out with greater prudence and more abundant merit, the confessor's advice should be asked. Confessors, however, are to be careful not to dissuade any one (*ne quemquam avertant*) from frequent and daily Communion, provided that he is in the state of grace and approaches with a right intention.

6. But since it is plain that, by frequent or daily reception of the Holy Eucharist, union with Christ is fostered, the spiritual life more abundantly sustained, the soul more richly endowed with virtues, and an even surer pledge of everlasting happiness bestowed on the recipient, therefore parish priests, confessors and preachers, in accordance with the approved teaching of the Roman Catechism (Part 2, c. 4. n. 60), are frequently, and with great zeal, to exhort the faithful to this devout and salutary practice.

7. Frequent and daily Communion is to be promoted especially in religious orders and congregations of all kinds;

with regard to which, however, the decree *Quemadmodum*, issued December 17, 1890, by the Sacred Congregation of Bishops and Regulars is to remain in force. It is also to be promoted especially in ecclesiastical seminaries, where students are preparing for the service of the altar; as also in all Christian establishments, of whatever kind, for the training of youth.

8. In the case of religious institutes, whether of solemn or simple vows, in whose rules, or constitutions, or calendars, Communion is assigned to certain fixed days, such regulations are to be regarded as *directive* and not *preceptive*. In such cases the appointed number of Communions should be regarded as a minimum, and not as setting a limit to the devotion of the religious. Therefore, freedom of access to the Eucharistic table, whether more frequently or daily, must always be allowed them, according to the principles above laid down in this decree. And in order that all religious of both sexes may clearly understand the provisions of this decree, the Superior of each house is to see that it is read in community, in the vernacular, every year within the octave of the Feast of Corpus Christi.

9. Finally, after the publication of this decree, all ecclesiastical writers are to cease from contentious controversies concerning the dispositions requisite for frequent and daily Communion.

All this having been reported to His Holiness Pope Pius X by the undersigned Secretary of the Sacred Congregation, in an audience held on December 17, 1905, His Holiness ratified and confirmed the present decree, and ordered it to be published, anything to the contrary notwithstanding. He further ordered that it should be sent to all local ordinaries, and regular prelates, to be communicated by them to their respective seminaries, parishes, religious institutes and priests; and that in their reports concerning the state of their respective dioceses or institutes, they should inform the Holy See concerning the execution of the matters therein determined.

Given at Rome, December 20, 1905. Vincent, Card. Bish. of Palestrina, Pref.— Cajetan de Lai, secr.

We add here the Decree on the Confession of daily communicants.

His Holiness Pope Pius X most earnestly desires that the praiseworthy custom, so very acceptable to God, by

which the faithful, in the state of grace and with a right intention, approach daily Holy Communion, may become more general and may lead to more virtuous lives. For which reason, graciously and gladly receiving the petitions of many persons addressed to him through the Most Eminent Cardinal Casimir Gennari, he has justly determined to grant a special favor to all those who follow or desire to follow the practice aforesaid.

Pope Clement XIII, of happy memory, by a decree of this Sacred Congregation of December 9, 1763, granted to all the faithful "who, striving to purify their souls by frequent confession of their sins, were accustomed, unless they were legitimately hindered, to approach the Sacrament of Penance at least once a week, and gaining all indulgences whatsoever, without the actual confession, which otherwise would be necessary for gaining them; this concession, however, being in no wise applicable to the indulgences of a jubilee, whether ordinary or extraordinary, or to other indulgences granted in like manner; for which, besides the other works enjoined, sacramental confession must be made within the time prescribed." Now, however, to all the faithful who, being in the state of grace and having a right and devout intention, are accustomed daily to receive the Holy Eucharist of the Altar, even if they once or twice in a week omit their daily Communion, our Most Holy Father Pius X grants that they may avail themselves of the above-mentioned Indult of Clement XIII, of happy memory, without the weekly confession which in other circumstances is still of obligation for rightly gaining the indulgences that occur during the week. His Holiness, moreover, has graciously declared that this privilege will hold good in future times. Anything to the contrary notwithstanding.

Given at Rome, February 14, 1906. — A. Card. Tripepi, Pref.— D. Panici, Archp. of Laodicea, secr.

261. *Q. What should we do after Holy Communion?*

A. After Holy Communion we should spend some time in adoring our Lord, in thanking Him for the grace we have received, and in asking Him for the blessings we need.

God has a right to require and actually does require a continual thanksgiving from us. Every moment of our existence we are the objects of His paternal solicitude,

for which He demands a grateful heart. Gratitude is a natural adornment of the human heart. In the written Law its importance is very frequently impressed upon the chosen people of God. Whenever God favored His people in a particular manner, He required of them to have a yearly thanksgiving in remembrance of it. So have the Jews of our days preserved their religious ceremonies, their special days of thanksgiving, because while the Angel exterminated the first born, their ancestors were spared, and God led them through the Red Sea and saved them from the hands of their enemies; because He gave them in the desert the bread from heaven, and so on. They were commanded to keep continually in the Ark of the Covenant a part of the manna as a reminder of the gratitude they owed for that great favor. For no other reason, says St. John Chrysostom, has God allowed sacrifices to be offered than in order to induce all to be grateful. God prefaces the third commandment by the word "*Remember*," to show that we must keep holy the Sabbath in grateful remembrance of the benefits received, especially during the week. Under the New Dispensation man's gratitude ought to be more perfect than under the Old, because the latter was only the figure of the reality. St. Paul in his Epistle to the Ephesians (5:20) says: "Giving thanks *always* unto God and the Father in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ." The Apostle admits no restrictions of time, for if we were to spend our whole life in thanksgiving, we never could adequately thank Him. Yet the Church, the inspired Spouse of the Holy Ghost, singles out certain occasions, which require a more special thanksgiving. Foremost amongst these is the thanksgiving after Holy Communion; in which we receive not merely a priceless gift, but the Author of all grace and the Source of all good. It stands to reason then that some time should be spent in thanksgiving after Holy Communion. The Catechism does not state how much time should be devoted to it. Ascetic theologians require at least a quarter of an hour; the Catholic guided by faith and realizing the dignity of his Guest and the honor bestowed upon the host, will find the time too short.

The most appropriate time for receiving Holy Communion is during Mass after the Communion of the priest, because the Post-communion prayers, as said by the priest in his own name and in that of all other communicants, express-

ing the sentiments of the Church, are by far the most becoming thanksgiving. If other duties should call us away immediately after Mass, it is advisable to receive before Mass, as attendance at Mass will be the most worthy thanksgiving.

The Catechism specifies what acts should be included in our thanksgiving. The first is an act of adoration. Remembering that the same God, who is the object of the eternal adoration of the angels and saints, is present really and substantially in our hearts, we must pay Him the homage of our submission, and invite the angelic choirs, and especially the Virgin Mother, to assist us in adoring our Lord and Master.

Then we must thank Him in particular for His condescension, not merely as the Centurion for coming under our roof and being our guest, but for the signal honor of uniting Himself with us.

Lastly, with the confidence of a child, we should ask Him all the blessings we need, not only for ourselves, but also for all those who are near and dear to us. We should imagine, as St. Teresa did, our Lord on His throne within our heart anxious to bestow upon us whatever favor we may ask, provided it be conducive to our real welfare. Asking Him no favors would mean a practical doubt of His real presence. Asking for great things indicates our firm belief in His mercy and power.

LESSON TWENTY-FOURTH

ON THE SACRIFICE OF THE MASS

262. *Q. When and where are the bread and wine changed into the body and blood of Christ?*

A. The bread and wine are changed into the body and blood of Christ at the Consecration of the Mass.

In the foregoing two lessons we have considered the Sacrament; this lesson is devoted to the Sacrifice. The act of transubstantiation whereby bread and wine are really changed into the body and blood of Christ is called consecration, because this wonderful change constitutes the highest form of consecration to God. The act of consecration is in the opinion of most theologians the essential part of the Sacrifice of the Mass. Theologians divide the Mass into essential and integral parts. An integral part is that without which the Sacrifice would still be a sacrifice, although imperfect; an essential part is that without which it would not be a sacrifice. Some theologians consider both the consecration and the Communion as essential parts, whilst by far the greatest number hold the consecration to be the only essential part and the offertory and Communion as integral parts. Their arguments may be reduced to the following: 1, The offertory cannot be essential, because the sacrifice consists in immolation, which the offertory is not. Communion also cannot be an essential part, because it is certain from the teaching of the Council of Trent, that Christ at the Last Supper indeed offered sacrifice, while it is not certain that He took the Communion of His own body. 2, Only that action can specifically be called essential, which was performed by Christ Himself, and which is now performed in His name, He being the chief offerer. 3, Consecration alone has all the requisites of a true Sacrifice, as we shall further see, when considering the nature of a sacrifice. The wonderful change of bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ being the sacrifice of the Mass, it follows that this change cannot be effected

without the sacrifice. If for any reason there is no sacrifice, there can be no change of bread and wine either. Should the elements be substantially vitiated, as when, for instance, the wine should have turned into vinegar, or the minister not be properly ordained, as is the case with the ministers of the Church of England, although believing in the real presence and transubstantiation, no change is effected because all the essential requisites of a sacrifice are not present. All Catholics are supposed to know at what particular time during Mass transubstantiation is effected.

Note 1. For a more detailed and plain explanation of this and the following questions we refer the reader to our work: Illustrated Explanations of the Prayers and Ceremonies of the Mass.

Note 2. For a better elucidation of so important a subject, we invert the next two questions, in order, first, to consider the nature of a sacrifice, and then to prove that the Mass is truly a sacrifice.

264. *Q. What is a sacrifice?*

A. A sacrifice is the offering of an object by a priest to God alone, and the consuming of it to acknowledge that He is the Creator and Lord of all things.

Cardinal Lugo gives us in the following words the end and the purpose of that highest act of religion, which we call sacrifice, as distinguished from all other good works. It is a protestation whereby we profess to have our whole being from God, and that, therefore, God deserves that in His honor and worship that same being and that same life be consumed. As, however, this is generally not allowed, instead of our own life we offer the life or the being of some other object, protesting that we would in the same way offer our own life, if it were allowed or necessary. Hence it follows that in every sacrifice there must be some destruction of the offering.

The above words apply only to a sacrifice proper. Often in Scripture the word has an improper or metaphorical meaning. The word sacrifice is sometimes used for any action referring to the glory of God, such as a praise service: "The sacrifice of praise shall glorify Me" (Ps. 11); or also, almsgiving: "Do not forget to do good and to impart; for by such sacrifices God's favor is obtained"

(Hebr. 13:16). Sacrifice is also used for every good work which implies any difficulty or hardship: "A sacrifice to God is an afflicted spirit" (Ps. 50:19). But sacrifice properly speaking is, as defined by the Catechism, an offering of an object by a priest to God alone, and the consuming of it to acknowledge that He is the Creator and Lord of all things. Each of these words is important.

The offering of an object, we might add *sensible* object, because sacrifice refers to the external service of God. The offering must be internal as well as external; by it an object is consecrated to God, that is, from profane becomes sacred. Although the offering and the consuming do not convey the same meaning, yet they sometimes mean the same, as by the same action an object may be offered and consumed or changed. The object must be a permanent substance, whether living or not, to distinguish it from prayers, hymns or other good works offered to God, which are not properly sacrifices.

By a priest, that is, by a man especially and lawfully deputed for that purpose. Not every one is called upon to offer sacrifice. Under the law of nature men were deputed for that purpose, either by an inspiration of God, such as Abel and Abraham; or by men, such as the heads of the family, or the first born. Under the written Law, only the sons of Aaron had, by an ordinance of God, that privilege, with the exception of the Sacrifice of the Paschal Lamb, as may be seen in the Book of Numbers.

To God alone; because sacrifice is an act of adoration, which can be given to God alone.

The consuming of it. The consuming means the change of the object. This change or consuming may be physical, when brought about in a physical way, as when a lamb is killed or wounded with a sword; or moral, when brought about, not in a physical, but in a way which is equivalent thereunto in our estimation; as may be when an object is reduced to a state in which it is less or not all adapted to its natural uses, as when wine was poured out at the sacrifice.

To acknowledge that He is the Creator and Lord of all things. Sacrifice is specially intended to express God's dominion over us, and our entire subjection to Him. If done with another intention, the sign would convey a false meaning and therefore there would be no sacrifice.

The essential conditions are consequently the five following. 1st, a proper object, 2nd, the sacrificial action, whereby that object is offered and consumed or changed, 3rd, the proper end of the sacrifice, which is the service of God alone; 4th, a lawful minister constituted and approved by God to offer a particular sacrifice; 5th, institution by the Creator, or at least the positive assurance of His acceptance.

In the Old Law there were various sacrifices; in the New Law there is but one.

263. *Q. What is the Mass?*

A. The Mass is the unbloody sacrifice of the body and blood of Christ.

Mass is the Holy Eucharist considered as a sacrifice. Among non-Catholics the idea of a true sacrifice was repudiated at the time of the Reformation. For them there are no sacrificing priests and no sacrifice. The Catholic Church, being the same yesterday and to-day and for ever, claims that the Holy Eucharist is the true sacrifice of the New Law. This is a dogma of faith. Very few points of Christian faith can be as easily and as conclusively proven as this. The Old Law and the New, Tradition, prescription, and reason, all prove the correctness of this Catholic dogma.

I. In the Ancient Testament we find the figures and prophecies concerning it. The Eucharistic Sacrifice was prefigured by the sacrifices of Aaron, the Paschal Lamb, and especially by the sacrifice of Melchisedech. These figures were true sacrifices; to all of them the definition given in the previous question can be applied; therefore with all the more reason must the Holy Eucharist, foreshadowed by them, be a true sacrifice. That for instance, the sacrifice of Melchisedech was a figure of the sacrifice of the New Law, may be proved as follows: David says of Christ: "Thou art a priest forever according to the order of Melchisedech" (Ps. 109:4); that is, Thou art a priest to offer forever a sacrifice after the rite of Melchisedech, who offered bread and wine. Christian Tradition has always understood it in that light. The prophets foretell the existence of a sacrifice under the New Dispensation. Isaiah says: "In that day there shall be an altar of the Lord in the midst of the land of Egypt" (19:19). And again: "I will take of them, (that is, of the Gentiles) to be

priests and levites saith the Lord" (66:21). When were these prophecies fulfilled, if not by the institution of the Eucharistic sacrifice?

1, Malachy speaks as follows of the emptiness of the Jewish sacrifices, and of the great sacrifice by which they were to be superseded: "I have no pleasure in you, saith the Lord of hosts; and I will not receive a gift of your hand. For from the rising of the sun even to the going down, My name is great among the Gentiles, and in every place there is sacrifice; and there is offered to My name a clean oblation: for My name is great among the Gentiles, saith the Lord of hosts" (Mal. 1:9). What other sacrifice does the prophet treat of here, if not of the sacrifice of our altars? His words cannot apply to any other. The prophet speaks of a new sacrifice. This cannot mean any new Jewish sacrifice. God rejects them all; He will receive no more sacrifices or gifts at their hands. 2, It cannot be a sacrifice of the Gentiles; which being offered to idols is not a clean oblation. 3, It is not the bloody sacrifice of the cross; for this was offered only once, and in one place, not among the Gentiles but among the Jews. 4, It cannot be a spiritual sacrifice of prayers, etc., because that was nothing new and God never abolished that. Therefore Malachy means the Mass. II. The New Testament contains clear evidences of the same. We have the institution itself and the practice of the Apostles. When instituting the Holy Eucharist, Our Lord established the New Covenant, which was to be the fulfilment of the Old, of which there is question in Exodus XXIV and Hebrews IX. As the first Covenant was confirmed with the blood of a victim, so also had the New to be consecrated with the blood of sacrifice. Compare the words used on both occasions; they need no explanation. 1, Moses took the blood (of the sacrifice) and sprinkled it upon the people, saying: "This is the blood of the Covenant which the Lord hath made with you" (Exod. 24:8). Christ took the chalice and giving it to His Apostles, said: "This is the chalice, the new Testament in My blood, which shall be shed for you" (Luke 22:20).

2. But how did the Apostles understand it? Did they believe in the existence of a sacrifice? St. Paul says: "You cannot drink the chalice of the Lord and the chalice of devils; you cannot be partakers of the table of the

Lord and of the table of devils" (1 Cor. 10:21). St. Paul here clearly opposes the Christian sacrifice to the idolatrous sacrifices of the Gentiles.

"We have an altar," says St. Paul again, "whereof they have no power to eat who serve the tabernacle" (Hebr. 13: 10). St. Paul had no other but the Christian altar, whereof those who still clung to Jewish errors could not partake.

III. The Holy Fathers, the Councils of the Church have from the earliest ages of Christianity been unanimous in proclaiming to the world the existence of the sacrifice of the Mass.

IV. There is besides the argument of prescription. When the leaders of the Reformation raised the banner of revolt, the universal Church was in possession of the Sacrifice of the Mass. Could it be that Christ was so unfaithful to His promises that the Church, with which He promised to remain unto the end of time, and besides which no other existed, had fallen for so many centuries into the grossest idolatry?

V. Plutarch in his day claimed that none had ever seen a town or a country without a sacrifice. Believers in the Bible must admit that under the natural as well as under the written law there were sacrifices; why then should there be none under the New Law? They reply that under the New Dispensation there is no need of it, as Christ has satisfied fully for us on the cross. But they forget that there was no need of them in the Old Law, because Christ satisfied also for those who lived before Him. Doing away with the sacrifice of the Mass is depriving man of an adequate means to honor God and show his entire dependence upon Him.

Besides all the conditions of a sacrifice are found in the Mass, and therefore the Mass is a true sacrifice. There is lawful institution, since Christ commanded His Apostles at the Last Supper to do what He had done. He had offered the first unbloody sacrifice of Himself; He willed His Apostles to do the same. The purpose of His doing so was to give to His Father adequate glory; the same is the purpose of the Mass. The priest at Mass is the same as the priest at the Last Supper. Christ Himself offering Himself now through the ministry of the priests. The offering is also the same, Christ Himself, who is immolated in an unbloody manner, not only mystically, in as far as the

separate consecration of the different elements represent the body and blood of Christ as separated from each other, but also in reality, as the humanity of Christ externally exists as dead under the sacramental species, is as it were turned into nothing, becoming as it does our spiritual food. The sacrificial action is the consecration, by which the divine Victim is immolated as a protestation of man's subjection to God.

The Mass is the great Sacrifice of the New Law, which is to last as long as Christ shall continue to act as Mediator on behalf of sinful man, that is, unto the end of time. By it Christ offers His body and blood to the Eternal Father in an unbloody manner.

265. *Q. Is the Mass the same sacrifice as that of the Cross?*

A. The Mass is the same sacrifice as that of the Cross.

From what we have seen in the preceding question, it naturally follows that the Sacrifice of the Mass must be essentially the same as the sacrifice of the Cross, for the simple reason that under the New Dispensation there was to be but one sacrifice. The Mass is not only the memorial, the representation, but the continuation of the sacrifice of the Cross.

266. *Q. How is the Mass the same sacrifice as that of the Cross?*

A. The Mass is the same sacrifice as that of the Cross because the offering and the priest are the same — Christ our Blessed Lord; and the ends for which the sacrifice of the Mass is offered are the same as those of the sacrifice of the Cross.

The reason why the Sacrifice of the Mass is the same as that of the Cross, is because the essentials of a sacrifice are the same in both. First, there is the same offering, Christ our Blessed Lord. The memorable words of St. Andrew, when ordered to offer sacrifice to idols, which he indignantly refused, show that the Apostles themselves taught and believed as the Catholic Church, as a whole and every Catholic in particular, teaches and believes. "I offer daily," says the Apostle, "to almighty God the immaculate Lamb on the altar. The offered Lamb, after all the faithful have eaten His flesh, remains nevertheless entire and

living." The Council of Trent teaches the same doctrine. "One and the selfsame Victim, the same Offerer now through the ministry of the priests, who offered Himself on the cross, the manner of offering only being different." That is why the Church in one of the liturgical prayers says: "As often as the memory of the offering is celebrated, the work of our redemption is renewed;" the same as if the Son of God sacrificed again His body and blood for us on the cross, with some accidental differences only. Christ devised in the institution of the Sacrifice of the New Law, a means whereby to show His infinite love for man. He would continue to offer Himself to His heavenly Father for their sins unto the end of time.

At Mass and on the Cross, the same High-Priest officiates. Christ is the priest forever according to the order of Melchisedech. He would not be, if a human being took His place. "Think not," says St. John Chrysostom, "when you see a priest saying Mass, that he operates by himself, but believe that the hand of Christ is stretched out in an invisible manner and that He offers." If this were not the case, the words uttered by the priest at the consecration, which is the essential part of Mass, would be false and absurd. The priest says, as commanded by Christ at the Last Supper: "This is My body, This is My blood." These words are worse than meaningless, if it is not Jesus Christ uttering them by the mouth of the priest. Who will prescribe limits to God's power, and say that this is impossible? Christ is the chief Offerer, the priest is the servant acting in the name of Christ, personating Christ.

That the ends for which the sacrifice of the Cross and that of the Mass are the same, may be proved by a very plain argument. The sacrifice of the Mass takes the place of all the sacrifices of the Old Law; therefore it must contain in itself all their differences. If it did not, it would be eclipsed by the ancient sacrifices, which were but its figures and shadows. This is clear, for instance, in as far as the Mass is a propitiatory sacrifice for the living and for the dead. The very nature of a sacrifice demands it, as St. Paul argues: "Every High Priest taken from among men, is ordained for men in the things that appertain to God, that he may offer up gifts and sacrifices for sins" (Hebr. 5:1). We will show in the next question the same

to be the case with the other ends Christ had in view when dying on the Cross.

267. *Q. What were the ends for which the sacrifice of the Cross was offered?*

A. The ends for which the sacrifice of the Cross was offered were: 1st, to honor and glorify God; 2nd, to thank Him for all the graces bestowed on the whole world; 3rd, to satisfy God's justice for the sins of men; 4th, to obtain all graces and blessings.

As the sacrifice of the Cross, substantially the same as the sacrifice of the Mass, was to be the only sacrifice of the New Law and to replace all the sacrifices of the Old Law, it must be offered for the same ends for which the various sacrifices of the Mosaic Law had been ordered, because they were the figures of the future great Sacrifice.

After having freed His people from the slavery of Egypt through the ministry of Moses, God led them into the desert and gave them His Law. He gave His orders to Moses about establishing a determined form of religious worship, explaining in detail the sacrifices that were to last to the coming of the Messiah and the ceremonies which were to accompany them. Moses carried out faithfully the commands given to him. He ordered a tabernacle raised in the desert according to the model shown him on the mountain. St. Paul mentions two principal parts of this tabernacle, the holy place and Holy of Holies, separated by a curtain of precious drapery. In the holy place were the candlestick with seven branches, the loaves of proposition and the golden altar of perfumes. In The Holy of Holies was to be placed the Ark of the Testimony, and in this were kept the two stone tables, on which the commandments were written.

The sacrifices, which by command of God were to be offered in the tabernacle were two-fold; bloody and unbloody. The unbloody sacrifices consisted in the offering of small wafers of fine flour, mixed with oil, of libations of wine and flour mixed with oil, these were poured over the victims. The bloody sacrifices were of three sorts, holocausts, propitiatory sacrifices and peace-offerings. The end of the holocaust was to acknowledge God's supremacy, His sovereign dominion and our entire dependence upon Him.

The whole victim was to be consumed by fire. The propitiatory sacrifice was ordered in atonement for sin. The offerer extended his hands over the victim to show that it stood charged with his iniquities. To express the enormity of sin, the victim was then killed and consumed by fire. There were two sorts of peace-offerings, the one was in thanksgiving for benefits received; this was the eucharistic sacrifice, the other was for the purpose of obtaining new favors, and this was the impetratory sacrifice. The ceremonies attending these sacrifices may be seen at length in Leviticus; the ends are exactly those as here given by the Catechism for the sacrifice of the Cross. The very nature of this sacrifice suggests these four ends. First, Christ is God, He is the Offerer and the Victim, because He offers Himself. As God-Man, His primary object must be the honor of the Divinity, because this is the end of God's works. As the Offerer and the Victim are infinite, so also must the sacrifice be of infinite value; God is adequately honored by it. Secondly, Christ had taken upon Himself the sins of man, and His death on the cross consummated the perfect atonement for all sins committed, because the atonement was infinite. Thirdly, as by the sacrifice of Christ, the happy relations between God and man were restored, and the greatest blessings conferred on man, it was appropriate that He should return to His Father due thanks for all His favors; He alone could offer a thanksgiving worthy of the Father. That is why before beginning His passion, He repeatedly gave thanks to His Father. Fourthly, Christ intended that His sacrifice should be beneficial to all men, and that it should be the restoration, with but few exceptions, of man's primitive happy state destroyed by sin. He constituted of the infinite merits of His sacrifice a treasure of graces and blessings for all men, from which they all could draw under certain conditions.

These are the ends of the sacrifice of the Cross, and consequently, they are also the ends of the sacrifice of the Mass. Like the sacrifice of the Cross, so also the Mass is of infinite value, and thus it is the best means to attain these four ends. Christ is always living to make intercession for us. In the Mass He enables us to be His co-offerers; therefore if we desire to honor God to the best of our ability, to thank Him for the benefits we have received, and to secure a continuance of the same, as also,

to obtain pardon for our sins, Mass is the best means to secure these ends.

268. *Q. Is there any difference between the sacrifice of the Cross and the sacrifice of the Mass?*

A. Yes; the manner in which the sacrifice is offered is different. On the Cross Christ really shed His blood and was really slain; in the Mass there is no real shedding of blood nor real death, because Christ can die no more; but the sacrifice of the Mass, through the separate consecration of the bread and the wine, represents His death on the Cross.

The sacrifice of the Mass is specifically the same as the sacrifice of the Cross; the substance is the same in both, as the Council of Trent teaches in the following words: "In this divine sacrifice, which is consummated in the Mass, the selfsame Christ is contained and is immolated in an unbloody manner, who offered Himself once in a bloody manner on the Altar of the Cross. One and the same Victim, one and the same Offerer, now by the ministry of the priest, who offered Himself then on the cross, the manner only of offering being different." All differences, therefore, are merely accidental, concerning the manner of offering and its circumstances. The Catechism gives only one of these accidental differences. Theologians generally give the following:

1. On the Cross Christ offered Himself immediately; in the Mass He offers Himself through the ministry of His priests.

2. Then He offered Himself in His own visible form, mortal and passible, and therefore in a bloody manner; now under the appearances of bread and wine, immortal, impassible, in an unbloody manner. 3, The sacrifice of the Cross did not signify or express any other sacrifice; the sacrifice of the Mass is a commemoration of the sacrifice of the Cross. 4, On the Cross a superabundant price was paid for our salvation; in the Mass this price is applied to us. 5, The sacrifice of the Cross was offered only once; the sacrifice of the Mass will be offered continually in the Church to the consummation of the world. 6, There are besides some minor differences as to place, ceremonies, etc.

The sacrifice of the Mass is also substantially the same as the sacrifice of the Last Supper; there are, however, also some minor accidental differences. 1, At the Last Supper, Christ offered Himself as mortal; in the Mass He offers Himself, indeed in a state of death, but not as about to die. 2, Then He offered the sacrifice by Himself, now by the hands of the priest. 3, The Last Supper represented the death of Christ as a future event, the Mass represents it as a past event. 4, That of the Last Supper was not the image of any unbloody sacrifice; the Mass is a true copy and repetition of the sacrifice of the Last Supper. 5, There is besides the difference of time, place, and other circumstances.

269. *Q. How should we assist at Mass?*

A. We should assist at Mass with great interior recollection and piety and with every outward mark of respect and devotion.

The sacrifice of the Mass being substantially the same as the sacrifice of the Cross, it follows that its effects must be the same. These are infinite in themselves, but in their application to those present, they depend upon their dispositions. The dispositions being different, the results will also differ. We find a clear proof of this among those who assisted at the bloody sacrifice. Some went away striking their breast, confessing the divinity of Him, whom they had crucified, whereas the obstinate Jews failed to open their eyes. The good thief, recognizing in the one Crucified with him, the Son of God, had in virtue of the sacrifice all his sins forgiven, and received from the Saviour the assurance that that very day he would be with Him in Paradise. The angels of heaven must perceive the same difference of the applied fruits of the Mass among the assistants at the unbloody sacrifice. Those whom the sacrifice of the Cross did not benefit, were all the worse for the opportunities neglected; so also does assisting unbecomingly at the Mass make us more guilty in the eyes of God for our neglect to appreciate His favors. The Catechism therefore requires certain interior and exterior dispositions to enable us to obtain the four ends of the sacrifice. The interior dispositions are recollection and piety. Our thoughts ought to be concentrated on the great sacrifice, at which we assist as co-offerers. A lively faith must produce these dispo-

sitions. At the beginning of the Mass faith should prompt in us the following sentiments and thoughts: Now the unspeakable mystery of the passion and death of Christ is beginning, at which the legions of angels around the altar veil their faces and tremble with awe, and at which the devils in hell are seized with fear; in which the Son of God is both Offerer and Offering, and by which infinite honor is given to the Blessed Trinity, added with thanks to God's goodness for benefits bestowed, full satisfaction to God's justice for the sins of man, and in virtue of which God tenders to man an inexhaustible treasure of favors and blessings. Thoughts like these will cause recollection and piety. To prevent our thoughts from wandering, our interior recollection should be fostered by outward respect and devotion. We should keep our senses under restraint, lest they cause us distractions; and should pay attention to the ceremonies, which tend to promote our reverence and devotion; unless we do so, we would assist as sleeping members and leave the Church like the Jews, none the better for having assisted at the holy Sacrifice.

270. *Q. Which is the best manner of hearing Mass?* A. The best manner of hearing Mass is to offer it to God with the priest for the same purpose for which it is said, to meditate on Christ's sufferings and death, and to go to Holy Communion.

This question may be considered either absolutely, that is, the best manner in itself, or relatively, that is, the best manner for each individual. The best manner in itself is here explained by the Catechism. It is offering the sacrifice with the priest for the same purpose and exciting in ourselves the same sentiments which should animate him. This supposes that we think of what Jesus Christ, the chief Offerer, does at the Altar, and of the sentiments which He expresses to His heavenly Father, and that we unite ourselves with Him. As He did on the Cross, so He offers in every Mass to His heavenly Father, the same infinite adoration, the same thanksgiving, the same supplications and the same satisfaction. Jesus acts at the Mass as a kind father, whose children are unable to satisfy for the wrong they have done, and who takes upon himself the punishment of their faults, and implores for them pardon of the offended party. It is self-evident that we, as children, must

join in the atonement of our Father. As Jesus, by His mystical death on the altar, adores for us His Father, thanks Him and begs of Him fresh favors, so also must we with Jesus acknowledge God for our sovereign Lord, thank Him for all His temporal and spiritual blessings, and beg of Him all kinds of new favors. These sentiments should animate us at the different parts of the Mass. To effect this, we must be able to follow the priest. This would demand a thorough study of all the prayers and ceremonies. Some prayerbooks give us a verbal translation of these prayers and ceremonies. The best manner, therefore, to hear Mass is to say those prayers at the same time as they are uttered by the priest. To be acceptable, however, they must be the expression, not merely of our lips, but especially of our heart. We may assist at Mass also and meditate on Christ's sufferings and death, and on the ends of the Holy Sacrifice, and endeavor to express our sentiments spontaneously in prayer, without using a prayerbook. But this is only advisable to those who can sufficiently control their thoughts and prevent them from wandering about on other subjects. To the best manner of hearing Mass the Catechism refers also the receiving of Holy Communion really, or at least spiritually. By Holy Communion the representation of the sacrifice of the Mass is perfected; because it signifies how Jesus, who has given Himself to us without any reserve, sacrificed Himself entirely for us, and how we are intimately united with Him in the offering, how on account of His sacrifice we are reconciled with God and enjoy His intimate friendship. Moreover, the prayers said after Communion by the priest apply especially to those who have also received the Holy Eucharist. From the importance of the Mass in Catholic worship we may easily infer how eager Catholics should be to be well instructed in all that concerns this Holy Sacrifice. To appreciate and love it, we must understand it. The Holy Sacrifice however is offered for all, and if one be not sufficiently instructed to follow the priest, he will derive benefit from assisting at Mass, by making the intention of assisting at it with the best possible dispositions, and making the prayers and requests of the priest his own. To avoid distractions, the rosary, this great Catholic devotion, may be recited during Mass in union with the prayers of Christ continually pleading for us.

LESSON TWENTY-FIFTH

ON EXTREME UNCTION AND HOLY ORDERS

271. *Q. What is the Sacrament of Extreme Unction?* A. Extreme Unction is the Sacrament which, through the anointing and prayer of the priest, gives health and strength to the soul, and sometimes to the body, when we are in danger of death from sickness.

The definition here given of Extreme Unction represents the selfsame rite and ordinance, promulgated by St. James in his Catholic Epistle in the following words: "Is any one sick among you? Let him bring in the priests of the Church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord. And the prayer of faith shall save the sick man: and the Lord shall raise him up: and if he be in sins, they shall be forgiven him" (5: 15, 16).

Extreme Unction is the name now generally applied to this sacred rite. Before the twelfth century it used to be called the Sacrament of the dying, the anointing of the sick. The Reformers of the sixteenth century were the first to expunge this from their list of sacraments. The Catholic Church presents it to us now, as in the past centuries, as one of the seven Sacraments of the New Law. The Council of Trent called to explain and assert the teaching of the Church on all the points objected to by Luther and his followers, says: "If any one says that Extreme Unction is not truly and properly a Sacrament, instituted by our Lord Jesus Christ, and promulgated by the blessed Apostle James, but that it is only a ceremony derived from the Fathers, or a human fiction, let him be anathema." Of all the Sacraments, no other has, for all that concerns it, clearer Scriptural evidence. We first find in the words of St. James the three essentials of a Sacrament, viz.: an outward sign, the conferring of grace and the institution of Christ. The outward sign is the anointing and prayers accompanying it; this sign is permanent, because there is

no restriction of time or persons. "Is any one sick among you," says St. James, without distinction. There is also the promise of grace connected with the anointing and the prayer, "because it shall save him, raise him up, and his sins shall be forgiven." There is, besides, the divine institution, because God alone could annex the promised efficacy to the external sign. The above words of St. James indicate also the subject of Extreme Unction, one of the faithful dangerously sick. The minister of the Sacrament is the priest; *Let him bring in the priests of the Church. Let them pray over him and the prayer of faith;* behold the form of the Sacrament. Anointing him with *oil in the name of the Lord,* behold the matter. And finally the effects of Extreme Unction are, also included in the words of St. James.

Let a non-Catholic, who may never have heard of the Sacrament of Extreme Unction, consult his Bible; even the faulty King James' version, read the fifth chapter of St. James, and ask himself the question: "What Church still does and has always done what St. James here requires?"

Christian Tradition is the best interpreter of divine revelation. A practice so universal in both the Eastern and Western Church cannot but be handed down by the Apostles themselves, according to the well-known rule of St. Augustine: "What the universal Church believes, and has not been instituted by any Council, but has always been held, must be believed as having come down to us by apostolic authority."

Reason itself perceives at a glance the fitness and conveniences of such a Sacrament. The fact being once admitted that Christ came to redeem us, and furnish us with the means of salvation throughout the whole course of our life, is it not reasonable to think that He must have provided a special help for a most critical time, when we are in the greatest need. Nowhere in the Gospel is there any mention made of this Sacrament, neither of Confirmation, but we know that not all that Jesus did is recorded in the Gospel. St. Thomas gives us the following reason of this omission: "The Evangelists have particularly endeavored to record the information which was necessary for salvation, or for the government of the Church; Extreme Unction and Confirmation do not belong to either."

The Epistle of St. James was in the early days of the Reformation expunged from the canon of inspired books, as it contained so many condemnations of the novel doctrines; it was then familiarly styled "an epistle of straw." Since then, however, it has been taken up again, and is in itself a sufficient refutation of Protestantism.

272. Q. When should we receive Extreme Unction? A. We should receive Extreme Unction when we are in danger of death from sickness, or from a wound or accident.

The question here put by the Catechism resolves itself into this: "Who can receive the Sacrament of Extreme Unction," or "who is the subject of this Sacrament?" To receive it validly a man must be baptized, because without Baptism no other Sacrament can be received. The Sacraments were intended for the members of the Church; without Baptism a man cannot be a member of the Church. The subject of Extreme Unction is supposed to have, at some time, the use of reason. If he never had the use of reason, he never committed a sin; and there are no remains of sins to be forgiven. Hence children before attaining the use of reason cannot receive this Sacrament, nor those who have always been insane. The Council of Trent gives the following reason of this restriction: "Extreme Unction is the complement of Penance; as the above cannot receive the Sacrament of Penance, they are not capable either of its complement." In doubt whether they have had the use of reason or not, Extreme Unction is administered to them under condition. The subject of Extreme Unction must be in danger of death from sickness. Hence, those who are in danger of death otherwise than from sickness, cannot receive Extreme Unction, such as, those who are sentenced to death, soldiers leaving for the field of battle; women before childbirth, unless in this case peculiar circumstances would constitute a real danger. On the other hand, fit subjects of Extreme Unction are those who fail from old age and seem to die from day to day, although there be no particular sickness; also those who have been poisoned, or have been mortally wounded, even in a duel. In case of doubt, whether living or dead, Extreme Unction is administered under condition. The validity of this Sacrament also demands that there be on the

part of the subject a certain intention to receive the Sacrament. The general intention by which one is supposed to be disposed to use the necessary means of salvation, at least at a time when any real necessity exists, is deemed sufficient for the reception of this Sacrament. Hence unfit subjects would be those who have no intention whatsoever of receiving it, as the Congregation of the Holy Office has more than once declared. On the other hand, the Roman Ritual requires Extreme Unction to be administered to those sick, who, when in possession of their senses, did ask or would have asked for it, or gave some signs of contrition, even if afterwards they lost the use of speech and consciousness. In cases of doubt the Sacrament should be administered under condition. Extreme Unction is given to adult Catholics, deprived of their senses, although they have led a bad life, or even lost the use of reason in the very act of committing sin, provided it can be supposed that they have the general intention, as explained above. The Church, guided by the example of her divine Founder, who came to save sinners, deems that the Sacraments were instituted for men, and that they should be administered to them especially at the critical time of death, unless she is fully convinced of the unworthiness of the recipient; for she will not cast such pearls before swine.

273. *Q. Should we wait until we are in extreme danger before we receive Extreme Unction?*

A. We should not wait until we are in extreme danger before we receive Extreme Unction, but, if possible, we should receive it whilst we have the use of our senses.

The sickness justifying the administration of this Sacrament must constitute a real danger of death; but it does not mean extreme danger of death, that is, when the last moment is actually near. The Roman Catechism says that they commit a very grievous sin, who wait to administer it until all hope of recovery is lost, and the sick person is about to lose consciousness and life. The Church requires a probable danger; danger with equal chances for recovery or death, or even with somewhat more chances for recovery than death. It is a great mistake to delay the reception of this Sacrament, and this for two weighty reasons: 1, Because by doing so the sick person will not be so well dis-

posed, and 2, Because he will not likely receive the full benefit of the Sacrament by sharing in all its effects.

If Extreme Unction is what the Council of Trent declares it to be, the complement of Penance, it follows that in it the remission of sin, as in Penance, supposes also a true sorrow, and desire of the effects. If its administration is delayed till the patient has lost the use of reason, it is evident that he cannot give it a thought, for he cannot make acts of lively faith and resignation to God's holy will; and yet these are the requisite dispositions for the worthy reception of Extreme Unction.

One of the effects of Extreme Unction is to restore the sick to health, if God sees fit. The restoration to health is not expected to be miraculous, as it would be, if the Sacrament is received just at the last moment. It is meant to be the most powerful help, the best medicine; the longer delayed, the weaker it will prove.

There is a deep-seated misconception in the minds of many Catholics, that this Sacrament should be given at the very last moment, when all hope or chance of recovery is gone; this adds to the natural fear of death in the sick man. This is a sad mistake. If the sick were to know that this Sacrament should be administered at the first appearance of real danger, and that it is no sign that the sickness has made irreparable progress, they would be less alarmed, and would not receive the intimation of its administration as a sentence of death.

Those who attend the sick should also impress upon the attending physician their desire to be informed of the first approach of danger; and place no confidence in a physician who would make light of this very grave duty. As soon as in the judgment of the attending physician danger really exists, the pastor should be informed at once.

274. *Q. Which are the effects of the Sacrament of Extreme Unction?*

A. The effects of Extreme Unction are: 1st, To comfort us in the pains of sickness and to strengthen us against temptations; 2nd, To remit venial sins and to cleanse our souls from the remains of sin; 3rd, To restore us to health, when God sees fit.

The effects of Extreme Unction, as here given by the

Catechism, are those proclaimed by the Council of Trent in its canons on this subject, in the following words: "If any one says, that the sacred anointing of the sick does not give grace, nor remit sin or relieve the sick, but that it has ceased to exist, as if it had only been the gift of healing, let him be anathema."

Extreme Unction, being a Sacrament of the living, the first effect is an increase of sanctifying grace, and the sacramental grace to comfort us in the pains of sickness, and to strengthen us against temptation. To use the words of the Council of Trent, it eases and confirms the soul of the sick person, it excites in him a great confidence in God's mercy, by virtue of which he bears up more easily with the inconveniences and pains of sickness, and more effectually resists the temptations of the devil. The other two effects are also a part of its sacramental grace.

The second effect, as given by the Catechism, is to remit venial sin and to cleanse our souls from the remains of sin. The second part of this effect is considered in the following question. In regard to the remission of sin, the Catechism unduly restricts the efficacy of this Sacrament. Most theologians argue that Extreme Unction also remits mortal sins. First, because the Council of Trent, and St. James in his Catholic Epistle make no restrictions, and the form of the Sacrament consists of words applying to all sins. "By this holy anointing and His most bountiful mercy may the Lord forgive thee *Whatsoever* thou hast done by thy senses of sight, hearing, touch, etc." No distinction is made of mortal or venial sin. Secondly, because the word *sin*, unless otherwise restricted, means a mortal sin. Thirdly, because if it remitted only venial sin and the remnants of sin, it was superfluous on the part of St. James to add the condition: "And if he be in sins"; with very rare exceptions every one is guilty of venial sin and has on his soul the remains of sin. The question, however, discussed by theologians is, how Extreme Unction forgives mortal sin. Some claim that Extreme Unction remits mortal sin only indirectly, like the other Sacraments of the living; with this difference only, that while other Sacraments *probably* remit mortal sins, this *certainly* does. Others claim that mortal sins are forgiven *directly* by the Sacrament not indeed by virtue of its primary institution, because Baptism and Penance are specifically intended for that; but on account of

its secondary purpose, as it was chiefly and primarily intended to remit the remains of sin, it cannot remove these without remitting sin itself, which is the cause of the remains. Hence Extreme Unction and attrition, if no confession is possible, remits directly mortal sins. Whatever we may argue about the manner in which mortal sins are forgiven by this Sacrament, great men, like St. Charles Borromeo and Bellarmine, think that many will be saved by this Sacrament, who would otherwise be lost.

The third effect is to restore us to health if God sees fit. Restoration to health is a part of the sacramental grace conferred by this Sacrament. Whether restoration to health is conferred by the Sacrament itself, without regard to the dispositions of the subject, or whether it presupposes these dispositions and makes the effect dependent upon their presence in the receiver, is a disputed question among theologians. Restoration to health does not result infallibly, but only when it is expedient for the welfare of the soul. St. Thomas gives us the following reason for this restriction. "Extreme Unction does not restore bodily health from any natural qualities of the matter used, but in virtue of God's power, who acts reasonably. As reason cannot procure a secondary effect, which would not be conducive to the principal effect, hence the cure of the body does not always follow from this Sacrament, but only when it is conducive to a spiritual cure." It would, when conducive to the spiritual welfare, most probably always produce that effect, unless there should be an obstacle on the part of the recipient; such as a want of faith or confidence, or when it is delayed too long, and would require a miracle. Extreme Unction does not generally produce its effects in a miraculous manner, but in an ordinary way, assisting the natural causes; this is the teaching of Benedict XIV.

275. *Q. What do you mean by the remains of sin?*

A. By the remains of sin I mean the inclination to evil and the weakness of the will which are the result of our sins, and which remain after our sins have been forgiven.

Not all theologians explain in the same way what is meant by remains of sin. Some take them to be venial sins, but this view does not seem probable, because venial sins can be remitted without a Sacrament, and to remove them

no new infusion of grace is necessary, which is the common effect of all the Sacraments. If this should be the proper effect of this anointing, it might be hard to prove that Extreme Unction is a Sacrament, and St. James would not say "If he be in sins," because all have venial sins, since as the same Apostle says: "In many things we all offend" (3:2). Others give of the remains of sin the same definition as is here given by the Catechism, an inclination to evil and the weakness of the will. But this view also seems not to be altogether correct, because both the words of St. James and the words constituting the form of the Sacrament, hardly admit of that restriction. Besides experience goes to show, that Extreme Unction does not take away those remains of sin, because it generally happens that those who recover, feel the very same inclination to evil as they did before. And not without reason, because habits acquired by repeated actions causing this propensity to evil, cannot be overcome except by the frequent repetition of the contrary actions.

It would therefore be more correct to say that the remains of sin are of a two-fold nature, and that the removal of both is the purpose of Extreme Unction. First, remains of sin may be real sins remaining after all the other Sacraments have been received. It may be that after confession and Communion one falls into a mortal sin, and is afterwards not aware of it; it may happen that confession and Communion were not rightly received, and that without the sick person being conscious of it. These are real remains of sin, which are removed by Extreme Unction, unless the recipient puts an obstacle in the way. This seems to be implied in the words of St. James, in the teaching of both the Councils of Trent and of Florence, and in the formula used in administering Extreme Unction. The five senses, by which as through a door, sin enters into the soul, are anointed to indicate the general cleansing of all that is left of sin.

The remains of sin are also spiritual torpor, and anxiety, which, as a consequence of sin, torment the dying person more than the bodily sickness, which may prove the cause of his death. These anxieties over possibly a partly sinful life might serve the arch-enemy as a powerful weapon to throw the poor dying person into the abyss of despair. The wonderful effects of Extreme Unction in this respect

are apparent even to non-Catholics; for almost in every single case perfect quiet is restored to the soul.

276. Q. How should we receive the Sacrament of Extreme Unction?

A. We should receive the Sacrament of Extreme Unction in the state of grace, and with lively faith and resignation to the will of God.

A sufficient disposition for the worthy reception of Extreme Unction is the state of grace; this is in itself sufficient to obtain in a certain degree its effects. Extreme Unction is a Sacrament of the living, the worthy reception of which requires the state of grace, although it may also accidentally remit mortal sin and restore sanctifying grace. Further, as the Ritual of the Church directs, confession and Communion should, when possible, precede, and, besides, as we explained in the previous question, it should be administered at a time, when the sick are still in full possession of their mental faculties, in order that they may receive more abundant graces, and add to the workings of the Sacrament their faith and the submission of their will to God's holy will, whilst they are being anointed. The above is the order in which the Sacrament should be administered but, if for some reason or other confession and Communion cannot precede, Extreme Unction is to be given without them. When, in addition to the state of grace, the patient has also a lively faith and is resigned to God's holy will, his reception of Extreme Unction will be still more worthy, and impart to him a larger share of the salutary effects of this Sacrament.

A lively faith will produce resignation to the will of God, and this, in the language of the saints, means perfect charity. Death is the greatest physical evil, but for these who are well prepared it is the passage to a better life. Faith tells us that nothing in this world happens without God's permission, that all is for the welfare of those who love him. Faith also teaches that hardships may be borne in the spirit of penance, and atone for past shortcomings. We are all doomed to die in punishment of the sin of Adam and Eve; yet death may be met and accepted as an atonement for sin, and so become meritorious. Faith teaches us that what God wills is best for us. We know not whether life or death is preferable; we should, therefore, leave the choice

to God and accept death with resignation. The merits of a work depend upon its conformity with the will of God; a work, however holy in itself, ceases to be good the very moment it ceases to be conformable to God's will. All earthly things, and man above all, were created for God's greater honor and glory; conformity with and resignation to His will gives Him the greatest honor. The end of our life is its most important period, for upon it depends our eternal welfare. Should God in His mercy see fit to call us away, the ready acceptance of this call will act as a perfect atonement for all the past. This resignation to His will may bring about, with greater probability one of the effects of Extreme Unction, restoration to health, because he who is so disposed, is less apt to abuse this great natural blessing.

277. *Q. Who is the minister of the Sacrament of Extreme Unction?*

A. The priest is the minister of the Sacrament of Extreme Unction.

The priest only is the minister of this Sacrament. The Council of Trent anathematized the contrary opinion: "If any one says that the elders of the Church, whom Blessed James wishes to be called to anoint the sick, are not the priests ordained by the Bishop, but the more advanced in age in the community, and that therefore the proper minister of Extreme Unction is not the priest only, let him be anathema." The word used by St. James means, in the Greek version and the Latin Vulgate, according to the constant interpretation of the Church and of the sacred writers, *priests,* although the word in itself means also elder or more advanced in age. A similar word was used by St. Paul in his first letter to Timothy and is applied by our adversaries not to lay elders but to ecclesiastical ministers. Besides as the priest is the only minister of penance, so he must also be of Extreme Unction, because the latter, as the Council of Trent teaches, is the complement of the former. Every priest can validly confer this Sacrament, even if he were excommunicated, suspended or interdicted, because, as this Sacrament has not been instituted in the form of a judicial process, it does not require any other authority than that conferred by ordination for its *valid* administration.

For the *licit* or lawful administration, however, except in the case of necessity, the proper minister is the pastor or the priest to whom he has entrusted the charge. In a case of necessity, if the pastor cannot be found or his consent obtained, any and every priest can licitly administer Extreme Unction.

Priests having charge of souls are obliged by justice and under pain of mortal sin to administer Extreme Unction to their subjects either by themselves or by another priest at their request. They would be guilty of mortal sin if, through their culpable negligence, a parishioner of theirs would not be anointed when in danger of death. The good shepherd must provide for his flock, not only that which is absolutely necessary, but also that which is very useful to salvation. If the sick person be in real need of his services, because it may be supposed that he is in mortal sin, the pastor is obliged to administer Extreme Unction, even with certain danger to his own life.

Priests not having charge of souls are not obliged to this by justice; but by charity, and should there be reason to suppose that in a certain case this Sacrament would be a necessary means of salvation for the sick person, they would be obliged under pain of mortal sin, to administer it to him even at the certain risk of their lives.

278. *Q. What is the Sacrament of Holy Orders?*

A. Holy Orders is a Sacrament by which Bishops, priests, and other ministers of the Church are ordained and receive the power and grace to perform their sacred duties.

In the Church of Christ there has been from apostolic ages a double hierarchy, the one of Holy Orders and the other of jurisdiction. The hierarchy of jurisdiction concerns the government of the faithful, and consists of the following dignitaries. 1, The Pope, who is the Bishop of Rome, to which charge is attached the supreme authority of teaching and governing both Bishops and faithful. 2, The Cardinals, who constitute the council of the Pope; they assist the supreme ruler very much like the seventy elders assisted Moses in judging difficult questions. Cardinals are not necessarily bishops, nor even priests. 3, Patriarchs are bishops, preceding Primates in rank. There are at present thirteen patriarchates. 4, Primates come next, they are

above metropolitans or archbishops. This honor does not bring with it any special jurisdiction. 5, Archbishops are the ecclesiastical superiors of an ecclesiastical province; the bishops of the various dioceses constituting the province are called their suffragans. Sometimes the head of a see may be an archbishop without any suffragans. 6, Bishops have the fulness of the priesthood. They may have a diocese to rule, or may be appointed as coadjutors or auxiliaries to a diocesan Bishop. There are besides several other minor prelacies. With the exception of the Papacy and the Episcopate, all the others are of ecclesiastical institution.

In the Latin Church there are seven Holy Orders, received in the following order, Janitor, Lector, Exorcist, Acolyte, Sub-deacon, Deacon, Priest. This last degree includes both priests and Bishops. The Greek Church, at least since the ninth century, has only four, priests, deacon, sub-deacon, and lector; the offices of the four minor orders of the Latin Church being divided among the sub-deacons and lectors. The Reformers of the sixteenth century, although they were nearly all fallen priests, rejected this Sacrament; they substituted preachers. The Anglican church alone still claims a real priesthood, although the late Pope Leo XIII openly declared their claims to be entirely unfounded; the chain of succession and lawful ordination having long ago been broken. All other Christian denominations never believed in what Catholics call the Sacrament of Holy Orders. The Catechism here only considers the sacramental character of Holy Orders in general, without considering, whether one and all of the seven orders have the essentials of a Sacrament.

The Council of Trent declares as a dogma a faith that Holy Orders is a Sacrament: "If any one says that Orders, or the sacred Ordination, is not truly and properly a Sacrament instituted by our Lord Jesus Christ, or that it is a human fiction, invented by the unskilled in ecclesiastical things, or that it is only a ceremony to elect ministers of the word of God and of the Sacraments, let him be anathema."

Our adversaries agree with us as to the requisites of a Sacrament, viz.: an external sign, the promise of grace attached to that sign, and the divine institution. These three essentials are undoubtedly to be found in Holy Orders; therefore Holy Orders is a Sacrament. Scripture, Tradition and

theological reasoning prove this abundantly. 1, The external sign is the imposition of hands. In the Acts of the Apostles (6:6) we read that the Apostles thus ordained the seven deacons: "They praying imposed hands upon them." A little later they consecrated Paul and Barnabas Bishops in the same manner: "Then they fasting and praying and imposing their hands upon them, sent them away" (Acts 13:3). St. Leo the Great and St. John Chrysostom understood the act of the Apostles in that light. In his first letter to Timothy (4:14) St. Paul reminds him of the graces received by the imposition of the hands of the priesthood. A little later (5:2) he warns him not to impose hands lightly upon any man. In his second epistle (1:6) St. Paul reminds him again of the graces received: "I admonish thee that thou stir up the grace of God which is in thee by the imposition of my hands." All interpreters understand by the imposition of hands the conferring of Holy Orders. The Greeks generally call ordination, the imposition of hands. 2. The promise of grace is equally clear. St. Paul shows that imposition of hands has particular graces attached to it: "Neglect not the grace that is in thee which was given thee by prophecy with imposition of the hands of the priesthood" (1 Tim. 4:14). And again: "I admonish thee, that thou stir up the grace which is in thee by the imposition of my hands." Could the promise of grace be more clearly expressed?

3. The divine command and institution is equally clearly expressed. God commanded the Apostles to consecrate Saul and Barnabas: The Holy Ghost said to the Apostles: "Separate Me Saul and Barnabas for the work whereunto I take them" (Acts 13:2). The consecration follows the command. In his discourse to the clergy of Ephesus St. Paul warns them to "take heed to the whole flock wherein the Holy Ghost had made them bishops" (Acts 20:28). "God gave," says St. Paul in his letter to the Ephesians (4:11) "some apostles, and some prophets, and other some evangelists, and other some pastors and doctors."

It is very clear that grace is attached to that sacred rite; therefore God is the author of it, as no one else could attach grace to a visible sign.

Christian Tradition has at all times been unanimous in holding that Holy Orders is a Sacrament. Witness not only the Councils, such as those of Chalcedon and Florence, but

also the Holy Fathers, such as St. Augustine, who, speaking of Baptism and Holy Orders, says: "Both are Sacraments; nobody doubts it, and the perpetual unity of both the Eastern and Western churches confirms it." The Eastern church has for many centuries past been but too anxious to find fault with the ceremonies and ecclesiastical observances of the Western Church, but never did it accuse the latter of having more or less Sacraments than Christ had instituted. The Rituals of both churches have always mentioned the seven Sacraments, and prescribed the ceremonies connected with their administration. In the very days of the Reformation in 1575 a Greek Patriarch of Constantinople openly proclaimed to a delegation of reformers, that the Greeks do not admit either more or less Sacraments than the Latins.

In the supposition even that neither Scripture nor Tradition would furnish us any convincing proofs of the sacramental character of Holy Orders, reason would almost be a sufficient guarantee, that it must be what the Catholic Church claims: God's works are perfect; when He gives a power, He also accompanies it with all that may be required for its lawful and proper exercise. Experience shows this to be the case in nature generally. By ordination certain powers are conferred on man, such as, administering the Sacraments; this power requires a corresponding grace for its proper discharge by sinful man. God then must also give the graces required that man may be worthy of his exalted ministry. We have proved that in Baptism such graces are given to enable man to receive worthily the other Sacraments; why should they be denied then in Holy Orders, which gives the power to administer the Sacraments, as administering unworthily must be at least as culpable as receiving unworthily. If it gives sanctifying grace, it must be truly and properly a Sacrament, because an external ceremony instituted for that purpose is a Sacrament.

All objections raised against this doctrine are so flimsy as to be easily refuted with the aid of a little elementary knowledge of the nature of a Sacrament.

279. *Q. What is necessary to receive Holy Orders worthily?*

A. To receive Holy Orders worthily it is necessary to

be in the state of grace, to have the necessary knowledge and a divine call to this sacred office.

From the candidate for Holy Orders various qualifications are required. Some of these are interior, such as regard especially the soul of the candidate; these are: a divine call, the state of grace and the intention to be a cleric. Other requisites are external such as, being confirmed, the exercise of the Order previously received, lawful age, sufficient knowledge, a title of ordination, immunity from censure and retreat. Other requisites again regard the mode of ordination, such as: proper materials, proper time, ordination by lawful degrees, proper place, and lawful Bishop.

Before explaining the three conditions for the worthy reception as indicated by the catechism, we will add a few words in explanation of the other requirements.

1. The intention to be a cleric. The various Orders by which the cleric ascends to the dignity of the priesthood are all of a permanent nature, the candidate must first make up his mind to abide by his clerical state.

2. Confirmation. The Council of Trent requires of those to be enrolled into the ecclesiastical militia, that they be previously confirmed before receiving the clerical tonsure.

3. Before a candidate is promoted to a higher Order, he is supposed to have previously exercised the power conferred on him by the lower Order.

4. Lawful age. The Council of Trent requires of candidates for clerical tonsure that they be confirmed, should know the rudiments of faith and be able to read and write. For minor Orders, that they know Latin. For subdeaconship, they must be in their 22nd year; for deaconship in their 23rd year, and for priesthood in their 25th year. To be a bishop they must have completed their 30th year. The right to dispense belongs in his ordinary right to the Sovereign Pontiff, who generally dispenses only candidates for the priesthood and then for good reasons.

5. A title of ordination. The clerics are strictly forbidden to engage in any secular business, so that they may devote all their time to the duties of their calling. They must therefore be provided with proper means of support. For the secular clergy a title of a benefice or pension, or of their patrimony is required, unless they be in the service

of a particular person or be working on missions in non-Catholic countries. For regulars, their vow of poverty is a sufficient title.

6. Immunity from censure. If the candidate were under ecclesiastical censure, either excommunication or interdict, this would prevent him from exercising the Order already received and from receiving a higher Order.

7. As a preparation for the worthy reception of the major Orders a few days' retreat is prescribed, that by prayer and solitude the candidate may, like the Apostles, prepare himself for the gifts of the Holy Ghost.

8. A certain time must elapse between the reception of the various Orders. This is prescribed by the Council of Trent for the minor Orders, unless the Bishop judges it advisable to confer them all on the same day. Between minor Orders and subdeaconship one year should elapse, unless the wants or the welfare of the Church, in the judgment of the Bishop, demand otherwise. Between the subdeaconship and deaconship also one year, of which for a good reason the Bishop can also dispense. Between the deaconship and the priesthood the same length of time should elapse, unless the Bishop for the good of his diocese thinks proper to dispense. No interstices or intervals are required between the priesthood and episcopate; so that the latter may be received the day following the ordination to the priesthood.

9. In regard to the proper time, although minor Orders may be conferred at any time, yet it is proper that they be conferred during Mass; they may be conferred besides the days on which major Orders may be received, on Sundays and Holidays. The major Orders are conferred on Ember-Saturdays; and the Saturday before Passion Sunday during Mass. The Consecration of a Bishop takes place on a Sunday or on the feast day of an Apostle. As these are only ecclesiastical ordinances, the proper authority can dispense therefrom.

10. The Holy Orders must be conferred in the order given in the previous question. This would not be necessary for the validity, because with the exception of the episcopate, which can be validly conferred on a priest only, a higher Order would be validly conferred without the lower, but it would be unlawful.

11. In regard to place, minor Orders may be conferred in any decent place, whilst the major Orders should be con-

ferred in the Cathedral, or in the principal church of a place.

12. Each Bishop has a certain territory assigned to him by the sovereign Pontiff; within the limits of this territory only he has any authority to rule; and as a Bishop must pass upon the qualifications of candidates to the priesthood within his diocese, so he alone should ordain therein, or delegate a brother Bishop.

We now come to the necessary qualities in a candidate for Holy Orders, as given by the Catechism. 1, The state of grace, because Holy Orders is a Sacrament of the living, and it would be a sacrilege to receive it in mortal sin. This applies to all the Holy Orders, although it is not absolutely sure that the minor Orders have the essentials of a Sacrament; because as there is a real doubt, receiving them in mortal sin would be exposing ourselves to the danger of committing a sacrilege. 2, The necessary knowledge. The higher the Order, the greater the knowledge required of the candidate. More may be required of a candidate, if circumstances of time and place demand more. In these days of unbelief and religious criticism a priest must be more learned than in times and places where none of the religious dogmas are assailed. The lips of the priest must guard knowledge; for all classes he must be a safe guide. 3, A divine call. Such a call is required for any state, but much more so for the clerical state on account of its dignity, sanctity of office and weighty responsibilities. This is the teaching of Holy Scripture. St. Paul says, "Neither doth any man take the honor to himself, but he that is called by God, as Aaron was" (Hebr. 5:4). When the apostles were deliberating about a successor to fill the place of Judas, they prayed to God as follows: "Thou, Lord, who knowest the hearts of all men, show whether of these two Thou hast chosen" (Acts 1:24). Christ Himself said to His Apostles, "You have not chosen Me, but I have chosen you" (John 15:16).

God does not generally send an angel from heaven to inform a man of his calling; man must therefore be guided by certain signs indicating such a vocation. These signs may be reduced to the following three. 1, A particular inclination for that state; if it proves strong and lasting, it must come from God. 2, Honesty of life; the priesthood will not change one's habits, and unless a good life has

preceded, he would not afterwards be the light and the model of those, whose mediator he is. God cannot wish to fill His sanctuary with ministers, whose doctrine is in open contradiction with their acts. 3, The right intention. "Every high-priest, taken from among men, is ordained for men in the things that appertain to God" (Hebr. 5:1). In these words St. Paul gives us the end we must have in view when aspiring to the dignity of the Christian priesthood.

The means to know whether these aspirations to the clerical state are from God are: 1st, Prayer: "Every one that seeketh, findeth; and to him that knocketh, it shall be opened" (Luke 11:10). 2, The advice of prudent men and especially of confessors, for they are the best fitted to guide and direct us in so momentous a selection. 3, A serious consideration of the obligations of the clerical state and a firm will to comply with them.

280. *Q. How should Christians look upon the priests of the Church?*

A. Christians should look upon the priests of the Church as the messengers of God and the dispensers of His mysteries.

"Honor to whom honor is due," says St. Paul to the Romans (4:1). In his first epistle to the Corinthians, he wishes that priests be looked upon as messengers of God and dispensers of His mysteries, and this is why they must be honored. The priesthood must be honored on account of its dignity, its office, and Him whom it represents.

1. In Holy Scripture the priests are called "the light of the world, the salt of the earth, the foundation of the Church, the gates of heaven, the ministers of God, angels of the Lord and gods upon earth." "The lips of the priest shall keep knowledge, and they shall seek the law at his mouth, because he is the angel of the Lord of hosts" (Mal. 2:7). "Thou shalt not speak ill of the gods, and the prince of thy people thou shalt not curse" (Exod. 22:28), is the command given by God to His people. St. Paul applies these words to the priests (Acts 23). According to St. Ambrose, to compare the royal dignity with that of the priest would be a weaker comparison than to compare lead

with gold. St. Ignatius the Martyr wrote to the Christians at Smyrna, that honor is first due to God, and next to God to the priests.

2. The priestly office is to teach men, to show them the way to heaven, and to act as mediators between God and men. The two great powers entrusted by Christ to the priests are: the power over the souls of the faithful, and the power over the body and blood of Jesus Christ. Of the former they make use in the Sacrament of penance, acting as plenipotentiaries in judgment over the souls of men and pronouncing the sentence, by which they are restored again to the friendship of God and to the rights of the divine sonship, or continue as slaves under the dominion of the devil. Christ bound Himself to ratify in heaven the sentence they would pass on earth. Furthermore the priests make use of a still greater power over the Almighty Himself in the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass; because at their pleasure they can offer every day to the eternal Father His only-begotten Son; they have to utter but a few words to change bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ. No angel in heaven can claim a like power; no other class of men have ever been endowed with power so great. "Great, immense, infinite is the dignity of the priest," says St. Ephrem.

3. The priest on earth in his ministrations takes the place of Jesus Christ Himself. St. Paul wrote to the Corinthians: "For Christ we are ambassadors, God, as it were, exhorting by us" (2.5:20). The priest is really the ambassador of Christ, for in his official capacity he acts in His name. He forgives sins in His name consecrates and blesses in His name.

Hence it follows that priests must be honored. As the sacrifices of the Old Law were but the figures of the sacrifice of the New, so also its priests were but the shadows of the priests of the New Law, so far as dignity and power are concerned. It was said of the former: "With all thy soul fear the Lord, and reverence His priests" (Eccli. 7:31). This applies even when their works do not correspond with their high calling. If we looked upon them as the messengers of God and the dispensers of His mysteries, we would treat them with becoming respect and veneration.

281. *Q. Who can confer the Sacrament of Holy Orders?*

A. Bishops can confer the Sacrament of Holy Orders.

The ordinary minister of a valid ordination is only a consecrated Bishop. A Bishop appointed by the Pope, but not yet consecrated, can perform all the acts depending on episcopal jurisdiction, conferred upon him by papal appointment, but he cannot ordain, because ordination belongs to the episcopal Order, conferred only by consecration. Hence it follows that a Bishop can validly ordain, even if he be heretical, excommunicated or degraded, provided he uses the proper matter and form with the proper intention of doing what the Church does. This explains why the Church looks so differently upon the ordination as practised in various non-Catholic churches. Whilst the Church considers as null and void the ordinations of the Anglicans, she holds as valid the ordinations of the Old-Catholics in Germany and Switzerland. In the Anglican church there is no episcopal character, and the proper matter and form have long ago been repudiated. The Old-Catholics, on the other hand, although excommunicated, have validly consecrated Bishops and therefore their ordinations are valid, although sacrilegious.

The extraordinary minister of a valid ordination to certain of the Holy Orders may be a simple priest by papal commission. Thus can Abbots confer minor Orders on their own subjects; most probably even the subdeaconate; some even claim that with papal delegation the episcopal character would not be necessary for conferring the deaconate. None but a Bishop can ordain priests or consecrate Bishops. We have seen the same for Confirmation, the ordinary minister of which is the Bishop, but the extraordinary minister may be a simple priest delegated by the Pope.

The lawful minister of Holy Orders is the candidate's own Bishop.

LESSON TWENTY-SIXTH

ON MATRIMONY

282. *Q. What is the Sacrament of Matrimony?*
A. The Sacrament of Matrimony is the Sacrament which unites a Christian man and woman in lawful marriage.

Matrimony etymologically is so called, as we may gather from the Roman Catechism following St. Thomas, because a woman principally marries that she may be a mother, or because to conceive, to bring forth and educate the child is the office of the mother; in matrimony the chief cares are those of the mother. Property left by parents is called patrimony, because it is chiefly the father's duty to see to the material wants of the family. Matrimony may be considered as a natural institution, or as a Sacrament. As a natural institution, common to the believing and the unbelieving, it may again be considered either as a contract, or as a permanent state of life. Inasmuch as it is a contract, it shares the nature of a natural and of a religious contract. It is a natural contract, because it is not a human invention, but deduces its origin from nature itself, for natural reason induces man to provide for the preservation of the human race by propagation, much more potently than for the preservation of the individual by taking food and drink, because the welfare of the whole race is preferable to that of the individual. To attain this end matrimony is necessary, because for the preservation of the human race nature not only intends that children should be born, but also that they may grow up to a perfect state of soul and body; and this cannot be, unless their parents are united by a permanent bond. This natural contract is also religious, because it has been instituted by God Himself; implicitly, in the creation of our first parents by giving them a nature, demanding its propagation from them; explicitly also, as is clear from various texts of Holy Scripture. Hence it follows, that as matrimony is a natural contract instituted by God

prior to all society, it can be called a civil contract only with reference to its mere accidental effects, such as succession, heritage and so on, and consequently, there can be a matrimonial contract even between those, who, for one reason or other may be debarred by the civil law. Matrimony in a more general acceptation is a permanent state of life.

Marriage considered as a Sacrament is the same natural matrimonial contract raised to the dignity of a Sacrament. Protestants of all shades have long since erased matrimony from their list of Sacraments. Modern Protestants differ in this from their ancestors in error in the early centuries of the Church, that while they claim that it is a contract probably instituted by God, the ancient heretics claimed it to be of devilish origin.

We prove Matrimony to be a Sacrament of the New Law, 1st, from Holy Scripture, 2nd, from the testimony of the Fathers, and 3rd, from reason. To prove that Matrimony is a Sacrament, we must prove that it contains all the essentials of a Sacrament, viz.: Divine institution, a visible sign, and the promise of sanctifying grace attached to that sign.

1. That marriage is instituted by God, may be understood in two different ways: first, that God is the author of the union between man and woman with regard to the propagation of the human race, and secondly, that God is the author of this union in reference to something which it signifies, and sanctifying those so joined. The first was denied by the ancient heretics, the second by Luther and his followers. We shall not insist upon proving the first. In regard to the second, we shall not adduce any text admitting of dubious interpretation. By proving that Matrimony is the sign of something sacred, a sign to which is attached the promise of grace, we also prove that it is of divine institution, even if Scripture would not furnish any direct mention of such institution, because no man or angel can institute such a sign. In the same way we prove the divine institution of the Sacraments of Confirmation, Holy Orders, and Extreme Unction.

2. That marriage is a sign of a sacred thing, and not a mere civil contract we prove from the epistle of St. Paul to the Ephesians (5:32): "This is a great Sacrament, but I speak in Christ and in the Church." St. Paul uses a Greek word, meaning both sacrament and mystery. In

King James' Version of the Bible this passage reads: "This is a great mystery." This same Greek word often occurs in the Bible, but only in this text do Catholics understand it to mean one of the Sacraments of the New Law. However, for the sake of argument, supposing the Protestant version to be correct, far from overthrowing the Catholic position, it rather strengthens it. Protestants by calling matrimony a great mystery, must need see in it something more than a mere civil contract; they would not call all contracts mysteries, and it would seem absurd to say that the matrimonial contract is a great mystery. We call that in which it excels all other contracts, a sacred symbol or sign. Protestant writers also contend that the words: "This is a great mystery" refer to the mystical union of Christ and the Church, not of husband and wife. This contention has been refuted by all the Fathers of the Church, explaining this text. Moreover the words used crush the objection, because the demonstrative *this* refers to what immediately precedes, viz.: the union of husband and wife, to which the whole chapter is devoted. The reading of the Greek text makes it very plain. St. Paul does not refer these words to the first matrimonial contract of Adam and Eve, but to the marriages of the faithful, who leave father and mother, and cleave to their wives, because Adam had no father and mother to leave. Therefore in marriage, as here described by the Apostle, we have the symbol, the sign.

3. To be a Sacrament, there must be attached to the sign the promise of grace. The words of St. Paul quoted above prove this to be the case. Marriage is not only a sign of the union of Christ with the Church, by reason of a certain conformity, but also by reason of spiritual love, by which Christ loves and rules the Church, and by which the Church cleaves to Christ, as a bride to the bridegroom. A mere civil contract could not signify this union; in the contracting parties union of mind is required, constituting that conformity with Christ and the Church. If God joins husband and wife, in order that their spiritual union may signify the mystical union of Christ with the Church, He undoubtedly gives them the graces without which this spiritual union could not exist. St. Paul confirms this in his first letter to Timothy (2:15), when speaking of the wife, he says: "She shall be saved through child-bearing, if she continue in faith and love, and sanctification with sobriety." St.

Paul here mentions for those engaged in the matrimonial state four favors or graces to overcome four evils, which cannot be avoided without the grace of God. These evils are: unfaithfulness to one another; aversion and hatred or quarrels, almost unavoidable, a certain laxity in morals caused by the rebellious tendencies of the senses, and lastly matrimonial excesses. To these he opposes faith, love, sanctification and sobriety; which graces the married have received at their marriage, and in which they must continue.

The Holy Fathers take the same view of matrimony. Calvin claimed that no one before St. Gregory the Great had considered marriage as a Sacrament; an assertion which, of course, he never proved. The great writers of the pre-Gregorian days took the Catholic view. Suffice it to quote the testimony of one, St. Leo, who preceded St. Gregory by 150 years. Writing to Rusticus, Bishop of Narbonne, he calls marriage "a Sacrament and a mystery." "Considering," he says, "that matrimonial society has been so established from the beginning, that, besides the union of the sexes, it should also contain in itself the Sacrament of Christ and of the Church, there can be no doubt, but that a woman, in whom there is not this nuptial mystery, does not belong to the matrimonial state." Sts. Chrysostom, Ambrose, Augustine, Jerome, all more ancient than St. Gregory, express themselves in the same way.

Viewing the question in the light of reason from premises clearly laid down in the Bible, we cannot but conclude that marriage is a Sacrament. From the fact that marriage is indissoluble and monogamous, St. Augustine concludes that it is a Sacrament. The antecedent is clear from the words of Christ: "Whosoever shall put away his wife and marry another, committeth adultery against her" (Mark 10:11); the Bible furnishes many similar passages. To show the connexion between the antecedent and the conclusion, we must prove that the monogamous and indissoluble marriage is a sacred sign and that it gives grace, for this is the essence of a Sacrament.

1. The absolute indissolubility of a monogamous marriage must be a sign of the union of Christ and the Church. If marriage be considered as a mere function of nature for the propagation of the human race, it would be hard to prove, why for barrenness the woman may not be put away, and

another taken in her place. If it be considered as instituted merely as a remedy against fornication, why could not a woman always sick be put away, and another be taken? Why is marriage dissoluble under certain conditions under the law of nature, when Christian marriage is absolutely indissoluble, if not because it signifies, in its institution, the indissoluble union of Christ and the Church? We have therefore in the unity and indissolubility of marriage the sacred sign of the Sacrament.

The second requisite for a Sacrament, the conferring of grace, may be deduced from the first. This indissoluble bond requires the grace of God, and God never fails to supply what is necessary. It will be admitted that it is extremely hard so to be united, that the union can be severed by death alone. Can we believe that God has instituted so hard a state, and does not by His grace help to overcome its great difficulties? We must not forget, besides, that the New Law is the law of grace, that under it the yoke is sweet and the burden light.

2. Another striking argument we find in the ends of matrimony, the propagation of the race and a remedy against the passions. In regard to the former, the end of marriage is not only the procreation of children, but their proper education as well. In addition to developing in them their mental faculties, Christian parents must also train them in the faith and religion of Christ, and take all possible care that they be living members of the Church. This divine obligation imposed on the parents must, indeed, be accomplished with the necessary divine grace, that it may be properly discharged. In regard to the second purpose of marriage, it stands to reason that, without the grace of God, it is not a sufficient remedy against the passions, because its use often tends rather to increase than to quench concupiscence. Sickness, prolonged separation, makes continence harder on the married than on the unmarried. The Author of marriage must therefore have provided a perfect remedy that those embracing the state instituted by Him may keep from sin. We must then logically conclude that marriage also confers grace.

3. The ceremonies accompanying the celebration of marriage prove that it is something more than a civil contract. From the beginning of the Church, marriage has always been included among the sacred functions. If it was a mere

natural contract, like buying and selling, or a mere human pursuit the Fathers of the Church would not have classed it with the holiest ceremonies of the ritual.

The objections raised by the reformers against this Catholic dogma are not serious, and may easily be refuted with the arguments given above.

283. *Q. Can a Christian man and woman be united in lawful marriage in any other way than by the Sacrament of Matrimony?*

A. A Christian man and woman cannot be united in lawful marriage in any other way than by the Sacrament of Matrimony, because Christ raised marriage to the dignity of a Sacrament.

In a letter to the King of Sardinia, dated 19th of September 1852, Pope Pius IX unhesitatingly sets forth the Catholic belief on this very important and far-reaching question. We give a partial translation of this letter. "It is a dogma of faith that marriage has been raised by our Lord Jesus Christ to the dignity of a Sacrament; and it is also a point of Catholic doctrine that the Sacrament is not an accidental quality added to the contract, but that it is of the very essence of marriage, so much so that conjugal union among Christians is unlawful, except in the Sacrament of marriage, without which it would be concubinage. A civil law, which, supposing the Sacrament separable from the contract in the case of Catholics, pretends to regulate its validity, opposes the teaching of the Church, usurps its inalienable rights, and practically places on the same level concubinage and the Sacrament of marriage, or legalizes them both equally. Let Cæsar, keeping what is Cæsar's, leave to the Church what belongs to the Church. Let the civil power settle the civil effects derived from marriage, but let it leave to the Church to regulate the validity of marriage itself among Christians. Let the civil law take for starting point the validity or nullity of marriage, as determined by the Church; beginning from this point, which is not within its sphere, let it regulate the civil effects only." The above words of the infallible teaching authority of the Church settles for ever the question at issue.

The question whether the Sacrament is separable from the contract among the faithful may be considered under a twofold aspect. 1, Whether it be separable as something

accidental is separable from something essentially different, as for instance, the Sacrament and the contract would be separable, if the Sacrament consisted in the blessing of the priest? The answer to this is given in Pius IX's condemnation of an heretical proposition containing that view. 2, The question may be whether the moral form, which Christ added to the matrimonial contract, is separable from it, so that marriage may be valid as a contract, yet null as a Sacrament. In an Allocution of the 27th of September, 1852, Pius IX answers the question in the following words: "As no Catholic ignores or can ignore that marriage is really and truly one of the seven Sacraments of the evangelical law instituted by Christ our Lord, and that, therefore, there can be no marriage among the faithful, unless it be at one and the same time a Sacrament, and that hence all other unions among Christians of man and woman, besides the Sacrament, though conformable to whatever civil law, is nothing but shameful concubinage, and that therefore the Sacrament can never be separated from the conjugal contract."

The Sovereign Pontiff restricts these words to the faithful, that is, to all those who have been baptized. The Evangelical Law, which constituted marriage a Sacrament, applies only to its subjects, that is, to those who by baptism have entered the fold of Christ. The infidels, living under the law of nature, have marriage as sanctioned by the natural law, a lawful contract, but not conferring grace. Baptism is, therefore, a necessary condition to the Sacrament of marriage. From the above we may deduce the following conclusions: If both parties are unbaptized, their contract is not a Sacrament, but a mere natural marriage. If one is baptized and the other not, there is a diriment impediment, and it is doubtful, whether there can be a Sacrament for the baptized party or not. If both are infidels, and after the matrimonial contract, are baptized, it is also doubtful whether the previous contract, which now becomes indissoluble, becomes also a Sacrament.

The teaching of the Church on this point affects Catholics and baptized non-Catholics alike, because their baptism subjects them to the authority of the Church.

284. *Q. Can the bond of Christian marriage be dissolved by any power?*

A. The bond of Christian marriage cannot be dissolved by any human power.

The indissolubility of marriage must not be confounded with the unity of marriage. Marriage might be monogamous and not be indissoluble. The indissolubility of marriage means its perpetual firmness which makes that, unlike other contracts, it cannot be limited to a certain time nor be revoked by the will of the contracting parties. A dissolution of marriage is perfect, when it severs the bond, or imperfect, when it means a mere separation, called in civil law, from bed and board. Considering its inherent firmness, marriage is distinguished into three classes. The first is the marriage contracted by heathens, when not opposed to any law rendering it null and void. This marriage can be dissolved as St. Paul clearly teaches in one of his epistles. The second is a marriage among Christians, that is, among those whose baptism is supposed to be valid, but the marriage is not consummated. This marriage may be dissolved either by the solemn profession of one of the parties, as the Council of Trent clearly teaches, or by a dispensation from the Sovereign Pontiff, as nearly all theologians hold. The third is the consummated marriage among Christians. Such a marriage can be dissolved only by death; for serious reasons separation from living together may be granted but never a severance or dissolution of the matrimonial bond. No human power, either in the Church or in the State, can dissolve the bond of such a marriage. God joined them together; God alone can separate them, and He does this by death.

Numerous texts of Holy Scripture do not leave any room for doubt. We will content ourselves with giving a few: "What God hath joined together, let no man put asunder. . . . Whosoever shall put away his wife and marry another committeth adultery against her" (Mark 10:9, 11). How plain! Christ allows of no exceptions. He who marries again, after having put away his wife, commits *adultery;* besides the sin of impurity, he is also guilty of injustice against her; which would not be so, if he were entirely free. "But I say to you that whosoever shall put away his wife, excepting the cause of fornication, maketh her to commit adultery, and he that shall marry her, that is put away, committeth adultery" (Mat. 5:32). We will hereafter ex-

plain how illogically Protestants argue from this text the reverse of the Catholic doctrine. Christ makes it very plain that whether a man puts away his wife for cause or without cause, he is an adulterer if he marry again. St. Matthew repeats the same teaching, chapter 19, v. 9. "Every one that putteth away his wife and marrieth another, committeth adultery; and he that marrieth her that is put away from her husband, committeth adultery." The three evangelists teach in most unmistakable terms the Catholic doctrine of the entire indissolubility of a consummated marriage among Christians. "The woman, that hath a husband whilst her husband liveth, is bound by the law; therefore, whilst her husband liveth, she shall be called an adulteress, if she be with another man" (Rom. 7:2, 3). St. Paul makes no exceptions; death alone can free her from her husband. "To them that are married not I, but the Lord commandeth, that the wife depart not from her husband, and if she depart, that she *remain unmarried*" (I Cor. 7: 10, 11). For believers in the Bible, even following no other guide than their own common sense, the contrary doctrine must seem absolutely absurd.

The traditions of both the Greek and the Latin churches are just as clear as the Bible. St. Augustine commenting the above words of the Apostle, says: "These words of the Apostle so often repeated, are true, living, healthy and plain. A wife may be lawfully put away for the cause of fornication, but she will not be free from the matrimonial bond, although she may never be reconciled with her husband." St. John Chrysostom of the Greek Church says: "He who marries another, after having put away his wife, becomes an adulterer. Do not tell me: he has put her away, because the one so put away is still his wife."

It seems strange that a so-called advanced civilization and enlightened age could have fostered so flagrant a violation of Christian ethics, as divorce and subsequent marriage; when reason, not blind-folded by lustful passions, but guided by revelation, must advocate the indissolubility of marriage.

1. The very reason of the Christian believer, as such, considers the marriage of the faithful as a sign or figure of the union of Christ with His Church. The Bible tells us it is; the natural consequence must then be that since this union will never be broken, neither should the matrimonial bond.

2. Divorce from the marriage tie brings with it the saddest results for the children. These separated from father and mother learn from their tenderest age to despise and even hate those whom nature commands them to honor and love. Such a defect is evidently inconsistent with the perfection required by the Gospel. The temporal and eternal welfare of the children demands the combined, mutual and harmonious efforts of both father and mother for many years; hence they likewise demand the indissolubility of the marriage tie.

3. The firmness of the marriage tie once shaken or destroyed, the way is paved to innumerable divorces and their frightful array of dissolute morals, as experience shows too plainly. The New Law, as promulgated by Christ, cannot sanction such laxity.

4. If even adultery could sever the marriage tie, this horrible sin would serve unscrupulous men and women as an inducement for procuring divorce; and this again is absolutely opposed to the spirit of the Gospel.

In order not to appear in so flagrant contradiction with the teaching of the Bible, the Protestant churches have seen proper to put a most unnatural meaning on some words of the Saviour as related by Sts. Matthew and Mark. In St. Matthew (5:32) we read: "Whosoever shall put away his wife, excepting the cause of fornication, maketh her to commit adultery, and he that shall marry her that is put away, committeth adultery." That the cause of fornication refers only to the dismissal of the guilty party, and not the lawfulness of subsequent marriage, is clear from the context; if by fornication the marriage tie were sundered, no adultery could be committed by a subsequent marriage; and yet we hear in each of the above texts Christ pronouncing such marriage adultery. Three interpretations may be put upon the above texts: 1, Christ, in replying to the question, whether under the law of Moses it was lawful to dismiss one's wife, replies: "Moses has permitted you in the case of adultery only to give a bill of divorce to your wife, and to marry another." So understood, the restriction applies only to the Law of Moses. Theologians generally are of the opinion that such bills of divorce in the Old Law severed the marriage tie. 2, The answer made by Christ should be divided into two parts, the first addressed to the Jews, the second to the disciples. The first part does not affirm the indissolubility of marriage, neither does it deny it; the

second part positively affirms it. 3, The excepting clause must be referred to the first part of the reply, the meaning being: "Whosoever puts away his wife, which is not allowed except in the case of fornication, and marries another, the first being alive, whether an adulteress or not, committeth adultery." Whichever of these three interpretations be accepted, it is clear that even the worst crime of either husband or wife, that of adultery, was to be no exception to the entire indissolubility of the marriage bond. Hence it follows that neither the ecclesiastical nor the civil courts have any power whatever of putting asunder what God has joined together.

285. *Q. Which are the effects of the Sacrament of Matrimony?*

A. The effects of the Sacrament of Matrimony are, 1st, to sanctify the love of husband and wife; 2nd, to give them grace to bear with each other's weaknesses; 3rd, to enable them to bring up their children in the fear and love of God.

The question here put by the Catechism seems to require a wider answer than is given to it. The effects of the Sacrament of marriage may be considered either of marriage as a contract, or of marriage as a Sacrament.

The effects of marriage considered as a contract are: 1st, the indissoluble bond, 2nd, the authority over one another's body in regard to the chief end intended by marriage, 3rd, the mutual obligation of perpetual fidelity to one another, 4th, the obligation of educating for the purposes intended the offspring of the matrimonial union; 5th, the obligation of cohabiting with and helping each other.

The effects of marriage considered as a Sacrament are: 1st, an increase of sanctifying grace, as in the other Sacraments of the living, which require the recipient to be in the state of grace. Besides this increase of grace common to all the Sacraments of the living, marriage also imparts sacramental graces, that is, actual graces to be given at the opportune moment. The Catechism enumerates three of these special helps to offset the three great hardships commonly resulting from matrimony. The first loss and inconvenience, as St. Thomas explains it, consists in this that the marriage act is liable to be detrimental to the mental powers and the bodily strength, and even to the blunting of the senses; but

all this is compensated by the procreation of children, by which the human race is propagated and God honored. The second loss or inconvenience consists in the continual anxiety of pleasing each other, of bringing forth and educating their children and of providing for the welfare of the family; and this is compensated by the mutual fidelity husband and wife pledge unto one another. The third loss or hardship is a certain perpetual servitude to one another, and this is compensated by the Sacrament, that is by the indissoluble bond, representing the union of Christ with the Church, by which they are obliged to love one another, as Christ loved the Church. Theologians call these the three favors conferred by marriage on the married, viz.: children, fidelity, Sacrament. We shall add in explanation the teaching of the Roman Catechism on the subject.

The first effect, as given by the Catechism, is: To sanctify the love of husband and wife. This corresponds to what the Roman Catechism and theologians call the grace of fidelity, which husband and wife pledge unto one another, whereby they give one another power over each other, promising never to violate this holy covenant of marriage. This is gathered from the words spoken by Adam, when he received Eve as his wife; words afterwards approved by Christ: "Wherefore a man shall leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife, and they shall be two in one flesh" (Gen. 2:24.-Mat. 19:5). Also from these words of the Apostle: "The wife hath not power of her own body, but the husband. And, in like manner, the husband also hath not power of his own body, but the wife" (1 Cor. 7:4). Therefore very justly does the Lord most seriously reprove adulterers, because they break this marital fidelity; and this He did even before the Jewish Law was perfected by the Evangelical. Fidelity further demands that husband and wife be united by a particular holy and pure love; that they do not love each other with mere sensual or carnal love, but as Christ loved the Church. Christ shows this boundless love, not for His personal gain, but for the good of His Spouse. The second effect of the Sacrament is: To give them grace to bear with each other's weaknesses. This corresponds with what the Roman Catechism and theologians call the good of the Sacrament. This consists in the marriage bond, which can never be severed. If marriage, as a Sacrament, signifies the union

of Christ with the Church, it is necessary that as Christ never leaves the Church, that so also husband and wife never separate in as far as the marriage bond is concerned. That this holy society may be preserved without quarrel or disturbance, God gives husband and wife the graces needed at the opportune moment to bear up with one another's weaknesses, and to discharge their respective duties. But they must also do their part, for grace is only a help added to our own efforts. The third effect of the Sacrament is: To enable them to bring up their children in the fear and love of God. St. Paul says of the married: "Such shall have tribulation of the flesh" (1 Cor. 7:28). Those tribulations are offset by the graces conferred by the Sacrament, for it effects that the union of the sexes, which out of the married state is unlawful and justly condemned, be honest. Children of a lawful marriage are a favor, a blessing. St. Paul valued it so highly as to say: "She (the wife) shall be saved through child-bearing" (1 Tim. 2:15). This must be understood not only of child-bearing, but also of their education in piety, because the Apostle immediately adds: "If she continue in faith."

We may add here that any preconcerted arrangement whereby a man and a woman before marriage pledge themselves to deprive the Sacrament of this triple effect, as given by the Roman Catechism, vitiates the contract and renders it null and void.

286. *Q. To receive the Sacrament of Matrimony worthily is it necessary to be in the state of grace?*

A. To receive the Sacrament of Matrimony worthily it is necessary to be in the state of grace, and it is necessary also to comply with the laws of the Church.

Marriage was not intended by Christ as a means whereby mortal sin should be forgiven. It was intended to be and is strictly a Sacrament of the living, which supposes the recipient to be in the state of grace. The worthy or licit reception of this Sacrament requires, 1st, the state of grace; 2nd, the absence of every impediment not only annulling, but also forbidding the Sacrament; 3rd, the observance of all that the proper celebration of marriage requires. Although it be not strictly required that the state of grace be obtained by the Sacrament of Penance, for an act of contrition may be sufficient, yet the Council of Trent ad-

vises that the bridegroom and the bride at least three days before the celebration of marriage go to confession and receive Holy Communion. Practically all good Catholics, as an immediate preparation for marriage, receive the Sacrament of Penance the day before, and, on the morning of the marriage, receive Holy Communion during the Nuptial Mass.

The worthy reception of marriage also demands the absence of every impediment. There are two kinds of impediments affecting marriage, diriment impediments, which render marriage null and void; and prohibitory impediments, which do not render marriage null and void but render its celebration sinful if not dispensed from by the lawful authority; which dispensation may be given only for serious reasons.

The prohibitory impediments are the following: 1st, A general prohibition of canon law, or a particular prohibition by the Church authorities. According to the ecclesiastical law, marriage should not be solemnized without the publication of the banns during High Mass on three preceding Sundays or Holidays. The same law forbids marriage of a Catholic with a heretic. More will be said on mixed marriages in the following pages. A particular prohibition may be issued by the Pope or Bishop for any good reason. 2nd, The common law of the Church forbids marriage from the first Sunday of Advent to Epiphany and from Ash-Wednesday to the eighth day after Easter. The law forbids not marriage itself, but the solemnizing of marriage, that is the solemn benediction during Mass, and also the celebration accompanying marriage at home, such as a banquet, dancing, etc., because during these penitential seasons all boisterous and profane amusements are forbidden. Custom has it that to assist at a marriage and bless it during the closed season, the priest should ask for a dispensation from the Bishop. 3rd, A prior promise of marriage renders a subsequent marriage unlawful, according to the New Marriage Legislation in force since Easter Sunday April 19, 1908, only when made *in writing*, although there is no necessity nor obligation to enter into formal engagement before marriage. In the eyes of the Church and before God, private betrothal after the above date between Catholic parties, or between fallen-away Catholics, begets no matrimonial obligation whatever, be-

cause the Church decrees that every prenuptial contract is void, unless it is written and duly attested. Parties wishing to become engaged must sign the prenuptial contract, and have their Bishop or pastor to witness it. In the absence of the Bishop or duly authorized priest, two witnesses must sign the engagement. If one or both of those to be engaged cannot write, this should be noted, and then *three* lay witnesses must sign the engagement in the absence of the Bishop or parish priest. These written engagements should be encouraged. If made some months before marriage, they will help to stop hasty alliances, which are the cause of so many divorces outside the Church, and of so many unhappy marriages among Catholics. This written contract would furnish good grounds in our civil courts for breach of promise suit. Protestants and all who have never been baptized in the Catholic faith are not subjects of this law; hence their private contracts bind, for the simple reason that the Church has not made these the conditions under which they must enter into a binding engagement. All fallen-away Catholics, whether they have become Protestants or infidels, are bound by the above law. The Church, like the State, can bind her refractory subjects. 4th, The following vows prohibit marriage: 1st, the simple vow of chastity, made in the world; 2nd, the vow of celibacy; 3rd, the vow to enter a religious community; 4th, the vow to receive Holy Orders.

The worthy reception of marriage further demands the observance of all that the proper celebration of marriage requires. This will be explained in the answers to other questions.

287. Q. Who has the right to make laws concerning the Sacrament of Marriage?

A. The Church alone has the right to make laws concerning the Sacrament of Marriage, though the State also has the right to make laws concerning the civil effects of the marriage contract.

The Lutherans and Calvinists claimed that marriage is a mere civil contract, and with a few restrictions, as given in Leviticus, conceded all power concerning it to the civil authority. A few theologians also, to court the favor of such men as Joseph II. of Austria, surnamed the Sexton, and Napoleon I. of France, upheld similar opinions.

These erroneous views found their way in the code of Napoleon, which establishes that all that is necessary for the validity of marriage is that mutual consent of the parties be declared before a civil magistrate without any regard for the authority of the Church. This obliges all candidates for matrimony in countries where the Code of Napoleon is in force, to go through the sham performance of a civil marriage. The Council of Trent had condemned these errors, but to evade the teaching of the Council, these cringing flatterers of the civil power pretended that the canons of the Council were disciplinarian, and not dogmatic, that whatever power the Church has in the matter, is derived from the civil power.

As the chief prerogative of the ecclesiastical authority, in legislating on the Sacrament of Matrimony consists in establishing restrictions or disabilities, or as theologians call them diriment impediments, we will prove that this power, by divine dispensation, belongs to the Church only. To Catholics this proposition does not admit of any doubt.

That the Church has this power we prove: 1st, Because the matrimonial contract is a Sacrament. If marriage has been entrusted to the dispensation of the Church as a Sacrament, it has been entrusted whole and entire, that is, as to both matter and form, which is the contract itself. The contract, therefore, to be valid, must be approved by the Church, otherwise it is unlawful and of its nature null and void. 2nd, If marriage has been entrusted to the Church as a Sacrament, the power required must be given her to administer it for the salvation of souls. But for this administration the power to establish impediments is necessary. Therefore, this power has been divinely conferred on the Church. Hence we read of St. Paul excommunicating the Corinthian, who had married his step-mother (1 Cor. 5), and promulgating the dissolubility of the marriage of an infidel converted to the faith.

The claim of this power is nothing new in the Church. She has claimed it from the beginning, and used it either by approving marriages prohibited by imperial laws, or by declaring null and void marriages sanctioned by the laws of heathen or Christian rulers. This uninterrupted Christian Tradition is a clear proof, dating back as it does from the days of the Apostles, that Christ conferred this power upon His Church. The Catechism says that the Church *alone*

has this power, leaving to state legislation only that which concerns the civil effects of Matrimony. The proof is clear. The matrimonial contract is either the Sacrament of marriage itself, or at least it is the matter of the Sacrament. In either case, it is a holy thing. Now, the Church alone has been appointed the guardian of holy things. Therefore, the Church alone has the power to legislate concerning the Sacrament of marriage, and to establish diriment impediments.

The Church has always exclusively claimed that power. She established these impediments the first three centuries of the Christian era, when there were no Christian rulers; she has held, as valid, marriages of children contracted without the consent of the parents, although the civil governments of many countries held them for null and void.

The contrary doctrine would lead to absurd consequences. It could hardly be possible that the same power should be immediately conferred upon two different tribunals. In that case a marriage might be at the same time valid and invalid; the matter of the Sacrament, which must need be always the same, would be subject to the whims of different rulers. This power in the hands of an atheistic or despotic State might become a powerful weapon for the destruction of Christianity, and even of the natural law. From the above it is evident that this power belongs to the Church by divine right, entirely independent of the State, or secular power. The State has, indeed, the right to make laws concerning the civil effects of the marriage contract.

288. *Q. Does the Church forbid the marriage of Catholics with persons who have a different religion, or no religion at all?*

A. The Church does forbid the marriage of Catholics with persons who have a different religion, or no religion at all.

We have clearly proved in the preceding answer that the Church, and the Church alone, has the right and the power to make laws concerning the Sacrament of marriage. The Catechism here mentions only one of the impediments created by the Church, viz.: the marriage of a Catholic with a non-Catholic. The non-Catholic is either baptized or not. In the latter case, between an unbaptized person and a

Catholic there is a diriment impediment, called *disparity of cult,* or worship, which makes the marriage null and void, unless a dispensation is previously obtained from the Bishop.

In the former case, it is commonly called *of mixed religion.* Such a marriage, to be lawful, needs a dispensation. To understand the present laws of the Church concerning these and other marriages see further on the new legislation on the subject in the explanation of question 404. The difference in these two cases depends upon the validity of the Baptism of the non-Catholic. In case of doubt concerning the validity of that Baptism, we should follow the rules laid down by the Sacred Congregation of the Inquisition (Nov. 17, 1830). In regard to non-Catholics, whose rituals prescribe the conferring of Baptism without the use of the necessary matter or form, each particular case must be investigated. In regard to others, who according to their ritual baptize validly, their baptism is taken to be valid. If after due investigation the doubt concerning the validity of Baptism remains, Baptism is supposed to be valid, *in view of marriage.*

The impediment *of disparity of cult* or worship is a diriment impediment, not by natural or divine law, but by the unwritten ecclesiastical law. It is certain that from the twelfth century this view has been general and looked upon as law. Although in the first centuries of the Christian era marriage between the faithful and the infidels was not void, yet it was generally illicit, even by virtue of the natural and divine law, on account of the danger of the perversion of the Catholic party and the children. We say generally, because in some cases it was licit, when, namely, there was no such danger, but on the contrary, a moral certainty of gaining the infidel or non-Catholic over to the faith. Such were, for instance, the marriages of St. Cecilia and Valerian, of St. Monica and Patricius, of St. Clothilda and Clovis.

The Church, having introduced these impediments, has the power to dispense from her own laws; but, as a rule, she does so in these cases very reluctantly, and only under certain conditions. These are the following: 1st, That there be a just and grave reason for such a marriage; 2nd, That there shall be no immediate danger of perversion to the Catholic party; 3rd, That the Catholic party promise

to do all in his or her power that the non-Catholic may be converted to the true faith.

These conditions are intended to off-set the sad results generally following such marriages.

289. *Q. Why does the Church forbid the marriage of Catholics with persons who have a different religion, or no religion at all?*

A. The Church forbids the marriage of Catholics with persons who have a different religion, or no religion at all, because such marriages generally lead to indifference, loss of faith, and to the neglect of the religious education of the children.

Mixed marriages are forbidden, because, in the ordinary course of things, they are generally detrimental to the spiritual interests of the parties. Generally speaking, they are illicit and this may be proved not merely by the ecclesiastical, but also by the natural and the divine law.

1. The natural law requires that we should not do that which usually endangers salvation, unless there is a grave reason in its favor. Mixed marriages are dangerous to the souls of the contracting parties and of others, and as a rule the plea alleged for contracting them does not compensate the danger. Therefore, they are forbidden. The danger to the Catholic party proceeds from the more lax life of the non-Catholic or the hatred the non-Catholic bears to the Catholic religion; the views of such a one on the indissolubility of the marriage tie usually differ entirely from the doctrine of the Church; hence the great inequality between the parties. The Catholic party gives himself or herself for life; usually not so is the intention of the non-Catholic. Moreover, who does not see the serious dangers to the faith and education of the offspring from a non-Catholic parent, who is either indifferent or bigoted. The reasons adduced to favor such marriages are, as a rule, not weighty enough, and entirely disproportionate to the dangers incurred.

2. In the Old Law, God forbade the Israelites to marry infidels (Deut. 7). St. Paul says: "A man that is a heretic avoid" (Tit. 3:10); continual company, such as married life imposes, must then be all the more forbidden.

3. The law of the Church is very plain on this subject. To show the sad results of mixed marriages in general,

we quote the eloquent words of an Irish Bishop: "It is found by experience that in far the greatest number of cases mixed marriages end unhappily. Exceptional cases there undoubtedly are where the marriage turns out happily; but who will venture to predict that this or that particular marriage will turn out happily for the faith, and not for its destruction? Our Lord has given us this imperative rule: 'He that will not hear the Church let him be to thee as the heathen and the publican.' Upon what is the Church built but on obedience? Who has a right to expect unity and happiness in marriage, if he begin in opposition to the mind of the Church and in disobedience to her voice? Who can expect union in marriage, if he will not have her blessing and God's grace to cement the union? To a true Catholic religion is the first of all things; the law of his life. The house of a Catholic should be a Catholic house. It should be pervaded by a certain religious tone. In a mixed marriage how much of this beautiful life disappears! The house is not Catholic. The atmosphere of the house is not Catholic. The symbols of the faith are not visible. The husband and wife have no communion of thought or feeling in the chief concern of life. They can never speak or act together in what concerns God, the soul, the Church or the life to come. They can have no joint council in what concerns the spiritual welfare of their children. How often are visible tokens of faith removed to avoid offense, while the faith is kept hidden from sight, like some dangerous secret. Then again, the children of a mixed marriage, who are bound to love and reverence both parents equally, are put to a severe trial, when they find them opposed to each other in all that concerns God, the soul and the life to come. Behold a few of the sources of unhappiness and perils to salvation to which a Catholic exposes himself or herself, by marrying a non-Catholic. It is then clearly the duty of Catholic parents to point out to their children the perils to salvation in such marriages, and to warn them often to be prudent in the control of their affections." Dr. Henry, Bishop of Down and Connor.

290. *Q. Why do many marriages prove unhappy?*

A. Many marriages prove unhappy because they are entered into hastily and without worthy motives.

Daily experience, as gathered from our law courts,

columns of sensational news in our daily papers, family occurrences that do not reach the public eye or ear, all tell the sad story of unhappy unions. There must be causes for such unhappiness, as nothing happens without a reason. It is of supreme importance to the candidates for the matrimonial state to know these causes, which, of their very nature, bring about misery, that, by avoiding them, they may find in matrimony a sure road to heaven. For the married hell here below generally means hell hereafter. The Catechism assigns two causes of unhappiness preceding the celebration of marriage, viz.: haste and the absence of worthy motives. Haste excludes proper deliberation. Of all contracts matrimony is the most important; therefore it demands also the most earnest deliberation. The first point to consider is whether matrimony is really the state to which God calls you and in which you will serve Him best. It cannot be said that all are called to the matrimonial state, or that it is immaterial to consider the question. That not all are called to the state of marriage is plain from the fact that Christ is the author also of the state of celibacy and virginal chastity. That it is very important to consult God before taking upon oneself such serious obligations, is clear from the fact that God, as our Master and Supreme Ruler, has a strict right to demand that we serve Him, as He wills. To avoid, therefore, possible, and perhaps irreparable mistakes, we must consult God by praying to Him for light and guidance. All would readily admit that this is really necessary for candidates for the cloister or the priesthood; but it would seem that it is all the more necessary for those who intend to enter the state of matrimony. Scripture tells us that when our Lord explained the requirements of evangelical perfection, some found them too hard and went their way. Scripture however also tells us that when our Lord explained the obligations of the married life, His *own disciples* said to him: "If the case of a man with his wife be so, it is not expedient to marry" (Mat. 19:10). Christ replied: "All men take not this word, but they to whom it is given."

After earnest prayer and serious deliberation, if one comes to the conclusion that marriage is his or her calling, the next question to consider, is whom he or she should choose as a partner and a helpmate in the journey of life, so as to serve God faithfully, whilst earning their living and

discharging their domestic and social duties, and thereby secure happiness here and hereafter. All other considerations should be made subservient to this one, such as, beauty, wealth, social standing, and the like, for some of these may rather hinder than promote salvation and the special end of marriage. Wherefore in the choice of a partner, God should again be consulted, and the results will prove satisfactory, and the marriage will have His blessing in this life, and will lead to endless bliss in the next. Candidates for matrimony, that they may obtain God's blessings and be real helpmates to each other after marriage, should beware of being to each other an occasion of sin, or of leading a life of sin together during their courtship, or engagement. A sinful preparation would, instead of a blessing, bring God's curse upon them. Marriage is holy, for it is a Sacrament or means of grace and salvation; therefore it must be received with a pure conscience. As the preliminary considerations are inconsistent with haste; the light from above will not shine in a heart darkened by sin. Too many mistakes are made in a partner for life, on account of worldly views, and sinful preparation for marriage prevents our young people from considering marriage as God would have them consider it.

The worthy motives for contracting marriage are the ends for which it was instituted. These worthy motives are well expressed in the prayer of Tobias and Sarah about to enter upon the matrimonial state. "And now, Lord, Thou knowest that not for fleshly lust do I take my sister (cousin) to wife but only for the love of posterity in which Thy name may be blessed, forever and ever" (Tob. 8:9). Sarah had also prayed: "Thou knowest, O Lord, that I never coveted a husband, and have kept my soul clean from all lust . . . But a husband I consented to take, with Thy fear, not with my lust" (Ibid. 3:16, 18). Similar dispositions would conduce to a happy marriage.

291. *Q. How should Christians prepare for a holy and happy marriage?*

A. Christians should prepare for a holy and happy marriage by receiving the Sacraments of Penance and Holy Eucharist; by begging God to grant them a pure intention and to direct their choice; and by seeking the advice of their parents and the blessing of their pastors.

By showing in the preceding answer the principal cause of unhappy marriages, we have partially answered the question. For the first remote preparation must consist in avoiding all that may lead to unhappy unions. The Catechism in this suggests some positive practices, which will invariably lead to happy unions.

Those who intend to get married or are preparing to enter that state, should so prepare themselves for that most important step by doing all in their power to receive the Sacrament of Matrimony worthily, so as to draw the divine blessing on their union. For this purpose they should more frequently than before, receive the Sacraments of Penance and Holy Eucharist. The freer the soul is from sin, the more worthy it is to receive God's favors and graces. The less covered with the dust of sin, the brighter will the rays of God's light shine upon it. In Holy Communion we receive God Himself, our Father and our Teacher. To Him, as to one more interested in our welfare than we can be, should our desires and our needs be made known; not that He does not know them far better than we do ourselves, but because He desires us to open our hearts to Him. He, as the Author of marriage, cannot but desire that the embracing of that state by those who are called, may contribute to their temporal and eternal welfare. With Christ really present in their hearts, inspired by Him and dispassionately considering the choice they should make, they cannot reach conclusions detrimental to their real welfare. Let them beg of Him to grant them a pure intention and to direct their choice; as both these petitions are absolutely good and necessary, they cannot be refused.

Furthermore the advice of parents and pastors should not be despised. They should always seek the advice of their parents and even, in many cases, that of their pastor or confessor as well.

The more serious our proposed undertaking, the more anxious we should be to seek the counsel of others, especially of those who we know are able to advise us rightly, and have our welfare at heart. Your parents have gone over the road, which you are about to take. Their experience will enable them to guide you and warn you against taking a false step. They have no other motive in the advice they give you than your welfare. They will see

what perhaps passion prevents you from seeing. Besides they are your natural instructors; they are answerable for your souls; God must, therefore, have given them sufficient light to direct you. You have the certainty that all unworthy motives are excluded from their consideration; therefore, who is better able than your parents to give you wholesome advice in this matter?

In case your parents are opposed to your intended marriage and give you good reasons for their opposition, be sure to yield to their reasons. But if they are moved to oppose it through prejudice or interested or base motives, you need not pay any heed to them; yet be always respectful towards them.

The pastor is the spiritual father and teacher of his flock. His advice when sought on a question of that importance should be most valuable. No unworthy motives could frame his official advice. In the confessional your confessor is the vicegerent of Christ, by whom he is charged with your spiritual welfare. If his advice be needed, wait not until you have settled the question and bound yourself by promise to marry your intended.

LESSON XXVII

THE SACRAMENTALS

292. *Q. What is a Sacramental?*

A. A Sacramental is anything set apart or blessed by the Church, to excite good thoughts and to increase devotion, and through those movements of the heart to remit the venial sins.

The word *sacramental* is derived from Sacrament, because it has a certain resemblance with a Sacrament. A sacramental has this in common with the Sacrament, that it is also instituted and used chiefly to produce certain spiritual effects. The sacramentals are instituted by the Church to excite good thoughts and to increase devotion, and by these movements of the heart, to remit venial sin. Who will deny the power of the Church to bless such articles? Did not Christ Himself bless the loaves and the fishes, which He miraculously multiplied to feed the hungry multitude? The Apostles followed His example. Many of the sacramentals now used in the Church can be traced back to the greatest antiquity, to the purest ages of Christianity, to the time, when in the opinion of the very reformers, the Church was still free from error and corruption. The sacramentals also produce their effects partly through the prayer and blessing of the Church, partly also through the acts of the faithful in using them piously. The sacramentals do not all produce the same effects, because that is not the purpose of their institution. They, however, do not produce these effects *infallibly,* because there is no special promise of God to that effect. But this much is sure, that they are preferable to any other good work, such as the reading of a spiritual book, which also excites good thoughts; because in the use of the sacramentals the merit and holiness of the Church concur in their effects. Water erroneously supposed to be blessed would not have the same effect as holy water, notwithstanding the devotion of those

making use of it. Catholics do not believe that the blessing of the Church alters the substance of these inanimate objects, but they believe that, on account of the prayers of the Church, God grants through them a special help. Numerous instances could be quoted from the Old Testament to show the wonderful effects of certain material objects when used by the command of God.

The effects of the sacramentals may be reduced chiefly to the five following: 1st, Exciting pious movements of grace; they however, as we have said, do not produce these infallibly. 2nd, Remission of venial sin, not by their own efficacy, as happens in the Sacraments, but through pious movements man is excited to contrition, and by this means venial sin is remitted. St. Thomas speaks in the following terms of the means contributing to the remission of venial sin: "In three different ways may certain things cause the remission of venial sin. First, inasmuch as through them grace is infused into the soul, because by the infusion of grace, venial sins are remitted. In this way through the instrumentality of the Sacraments of the New Law, by which grace is conferred, venial sins are remitted. Secondly, inasmuch as these things concur with a movement of hatred of sin; and in this way a general confession or the Lord's prayer contributes to the remission of venial sins. Thirdly, inasmuch as they are united to a movement of reverence toward God and holy things; in this way, the blessing of a Bishop, the sprinkling with holy water, each sacramental anointing, prayers in a consecrated or blessed Church, and many more of a like nature contribute to the remission of venial sin." This was written centuries before Luther detected that the Church had fallen into error! 3rd, Remission of the temporal punishment due to sin, both by means of an indulgence, annexed to the sacramental, and by the atonement provided by the act itself. 4th, Repressing and driving away the evil spirit, not merely by way of request, but by command, owing to special power given the Church against the demons. Christ promised this not only to His disciples, but also to the faithful. Hence it is highly commendable to sprinkle the dying with holy water, or to make the sign of the cross over them. If the devil is around at all times seeking whom he can devour, he must redouble his efforts when death draws near. 5th, Bodily health or some other temporal benefit. This may be ob-

tained sometimes directly, that is, owing to the prayers of the Church, although God does not always grant these favors, but only as He sees fit; sometimes indirectly, by removing the obnoxious influences of the evil spirit. Hence, as St. Thomas says: "We exorcise water, salt, houses," etc., "by invoking the divine Goodness to restrain the power of the devil who seeks to injure us, and commanding in the name of God the devil to depart from these objects, and not to hurt us through them."

293. *Q. What is the difference between the Sacraments and the sacramentals?*

A. The difference between the Sacraments and the sacramentals is: 1st, The Sacraments were instituted by Jesus Christ and the sacramentals were instituted by the Church. 2nd, The Sacraments give grace of themselves when we place no obstacle in the way; the sacramentals excite in us pious dispositions, by means of which we may obtain grace.

Christ instituted the Sacraments, the Church instituted the sacramentals. As Christ alone can be the author of a Sacrament, and as He left His work complete, one cult or form of worship for His one Church, so unto the end of the world, there will be seven Sacraments, neither more nor less. The Church of Christ is indefectible, always the same in her belief and teaching; if then at one time she had and claimed the right to institute sacramentals, she has that same right for all times to come; hence it is not necessary that we should trace back the existence of all the sacramentals to the days of the Apostles. Nothing prevents the Church from adding to the number of sacramentals. The use of holy water is more ancient than the use of scapulars and rosaries, but we have the same sanction for both.

The difference in the effects of the Sacraments and sacramentals, is easily perceived by reflecting on what we have said of the efficacy of the Sacraments, when treating of the Sacraments in general, and of the sacramentals in the preceding question. The Sacraments give grace of themselves, when there is no obstacle in the recipient; a child asleep when baptized receives through baptism the grace whereby it is changed from a child of wrath to a child of God; it may be entirely unaware of what happens; no

dispositions are required on its part, the Sacrament of Baptism gives grace of itself. In the case of an adult, if the obstacles to grace be removed, Baptism will work its effects with the same certainty as in the case of an infant, irrespective of his other dispositions. Not so with the sacramentals; their efficacy depends mostly upon the dispositions of those who make use of them; when used without the proper dispositions, they will not be instruments of grace, but will rather make the profaner liable to punishment.

294. *Q. Which is the chief sacramental used in the Church?*

A. The chief sacramental used in the Church is the sign of the cross.

The sign of the cross, being a sacramental, and not a Sacrament, is not of divine institution, but it is the principal religious symbol among Catholics and even in some schismatic churches. We may reasonably admit that it is of Apostolic institution, for we gather from Christian Tradition that the early Christians entertained an extraordinary devotion to the sign of the cross. Tertullian bears witness to the frequent use of it by the Christians in the beginning of the third century of the Christian era, when he says: "At every motion and every step, entering in or going out, when dressing, bathing, going to meals, lighting the lamps, sleeping or sitting, whatever we do, or whithersoever we go, we mark our forehead with the sign of the cross." Tertullian died in 245, and does not speak of the sign of the cross as of something new. Although Tertullian does not say so, well may we admit that a practice so universal at the beginning of the third century was introduced by the Apostles themselves. To show that the sign of the cross is no innovation, but must have its origin in the primitive ages of the Church, we shall add a few beautiful passages from the writings of St. John Chrysostom, who died in 407. "More precious than the universe, the cross glitters on the diadems of emperors. Everywhere it is present to our view. All Christians continually trace it on the noblest part of their body, on the forehead, where it shines as a column of glory. At the sacred table it is present; in the ordination of priests, we find it there also; in the mystical Supper of our Saviour, it is most prominent. It is drawn on every part of the horizon; on the tops of houses, in

public places, in inhabited parts and in deserts; along the roads, on mountains, in forests, on hills, on sea, on the masts of ships, on islands, on windows, over doors, on the necks of Christians, on their beds, garments, books, arms, and banquet couches, in feasts, on gold and silver vessels, among the pictures adorning the apartments. It is made over sick animals, over those possessed by the demon; in war, in peace, by day, by night, in pleasant reunions and penitential assemblies. Each one strives to be the first to seek the protection of this admirable sign. What is there surprising in this? The sign of the cross is the type of our deliverance, the monument of the liberation of mankind, the souvenir of the forbearance of our Lord. When you make it, remember what has been given for your ransom, and you will be the slave of no one. Make it, then, not only with your fingers, but with your faith. If you thus engrave it on your forehead, no impure spirit will dare to stand before you. He sees the blade with which he has been wounded, the sword, with which he has received his death-blow."

The above words of St. John Chrysostom apply with the same force to the teaching and the practice of the Catholic Church now, as they did fifteen centuries ago. There is no change in the true Church. The sign of our redemption is not to be found in those churches, which have not been empowered to convey unto men the fruits thereof.

295. *Q. How do we make the sign of the cross?*

A. We make the sign of the cross by putting the right hand to the forehead, then on the breast, and then to the left and right shoulders, saying, In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, Amen.

The Catechism gives one of the different ways to make the sign of the cross, the most common among the faithful. That in use in the early ages of the Church was a small cross, made with the thumb of the right hand, most commonly on the forehead. The constant use of the sign of the cross by the first Christians, and, much more, the fact that they were surrounded by heathens, to whom the sacred sign would have betrayed their faith and put them in danger of persecution, or would have exposed the sign itself to mockery, rendered it necessary for them to make it in such a manner as to escape observation. Next there is the

triple sign, made with the thumb on the forehead, the mouth, and the breast. At present this form is used more commonly by the Germans. It is also prescribed in the Mass at the beginning of each Gospel, but nowhere else in the liturgy. Lastly, the sign of the cross by excellence is that made as the Catechism here explains.

296. *Q. Why do we make the sign of the cross?*

A. We make the sign of the cross to show that we are Christians, and to profess our belief in the chief mysteries of our religion.

The early Christians paid, as we have seen, the greatest reverence to the sign of the cross. They had learned from experience that it is a symbol of power. "This sign," says St. Cyril of Jerusalem, "is a powerful protection. Armed with it, the Martyrs went forth to battle with the wild beasts of the amphitheatre, walked calmly to the stake to be burned, bowed their necks to the sword, or exposed their bodies to the lash. Tender virgins and children defied the power of the tyrant, and suffered death in its most terrible forms, whilst thousands sought the lonely deserts to practise a lifelong penance, sustained and encouraged by the same never-failing source of supernatural strength."

By the same sign the saints wrought innumerable miracles. St. Benedict by making the sign of the cross over the poisoned cup, frustrated the murderous attempt of his false brethren. "So great is the power of the sign of the cross," says Origen, "that if we place it before our eyes, if we keep it faithfully in our heart, neither concupiscence, nor lust, nor anger can resist it; at its appearance the whole army of the flesh and sin takes to flight." But especially is the sign of the cross a shield and safeguard against the temptations and dangers that threaten the life of the soul. The Fathers of the Church have insisted very strongly on this point. We are their successors in the faith; their devotion to the consoling emblem of man's redemption must stimulate us to be truly their successors in our constant and confiding use of the same sacred armor.

It is recognized all over the world as the distinctive sign of the true Christian; the successors of the early Christians in the true faith now use it as they used it. Those whose faith has since been shipwrecked and who no longer

profess the faith of the early Christians, have invariably given up that salutary practice.

297. *Q. How is the sign of the cross a profession of faith in the chief mysteries of our religion?*

A. The sign of the cross is a profession of faith in the chief mysteries of our religion, because it expresses the mysteries of the Unity and Trinity of God, and of the Incarnation and death of Our Lord.

298. *Q. How does the sign of the cross express the mystery of the Unity and Trinity of God?*

A. The words, *In the name,* express the Unity of God; the words that follow, *of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost,* express the mystery of the Trinity.

299. *Q. How does the sign of the cross express the mystery of the Incarnation and death of our Lord?*

A. The sign of the cross expresses the mystery of the Incarnation by reminding us that the Son of God, having become man, suffered death on the cross.

The sign of the cross, besides being the sign of power, is also the sign of knowledge. The form of words uttered in making it together with the action that accompanies them, teaches the chief mysteries of our religion. The words "In the name" instead of "In the names" express the fundamental truth of the unity of God, while the mention of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost declares that in this one God, there are three divine Persons, and thus teaches the mystery of the Adorable Trinity. The incarnation, death and resurrection of our Saviour are recalled by the form of the cross traced with the hand. No other formula could be more comprehensive, and at the same time more simple.

300. *Q. What other sacramental is in very frequent use?*

A. Another sacramental in very frequent use is holy water.

Holy water, as a sacramental, has been used in the Church from time immemorial. Like the sign of the cross, it dates back to the very origin of Christianity. Prior to

the coming of our Lord upon earth, water was in very frequent use in the religious ceremonies of both the Jewish and pagan nations. Water being the natural element for the removal of external defilements, it was to be expected that any system of religion, whether true or false, abounding in symbolical rites, would adopt water as the symbol of interior purity. With the establishment of the Mosaic Law, when the prescriptions of the ritual were defined with the greatest precision, purification with water was made to play an important part. The fact that a sort of holy water was in use both among the Jews and pagans does not prove that the Church borrowed her sacred rite from paganism. Christ, by instituting in His Church the use of symbols or signs, as He did in the institution of the Sacraments, obviously selected those most appropriate to denote the effects to be produced. The Church, acting on that inspiration, takes also for the form of its sacramentals such symbols as will naturally indicate the interior dispositions to be imparted. The early Christians had learned from St. Paul, that "every creature of God is good . . . that is, received with thanksgiving, for it is sanctified by the word of God and by prayer" (1 Tim. 4:4). Some attribute the introduction of holy water to the Apostle St. Matthew, whose action was approved by the other Apostles and soon became general. There seems to be no doubt but that the use of holy water dates from Apostolic times. Pope St. Alexander I, who governed the Church from 109 to 119 speaks of it, as of a universally existing practice.

301. *Q. What is holy water?*

A. Holy water is water blessed by the priest with solemn prayer to beg God's blessing on those who use it, and protection from the powers of darkness.

The blessing of the water consists of exorcisms, prayers and the mingling of salt with the water. By the fall of our first parents the spirit of evil obtained an influence not only over man, but also over inanimate nature, whence he is called in Scripture "the prince of the world." For this reason, when any material object is to be devoted to the service of God, an exorcism is generally first pronounced over it, to banish the evil spirit and destroy his influence; after which one or more prayers are said to call down the blessing of God upon it, and upon those who use it in the

spirit of faith. In the exorcism of the salt, the priest declares that he exorcises it by the Living God, the True God, the Holy God, by the God who commanded the prophet Eliseus to cast salt into the water to purify it, in order that whosoever uses it, may enjoy health of body and soul; that all phantasms and wickedness and all deceits of the devil may depart from the places where it is sprinkled. In the blessing of the salt the Church begs God to attach a triple efficacy to the salt: 1st, That it may be means of salvation to the soul; 2nd, That, it may be a preservative against corporal dangers; 3rd, That it may sanctify everything with which it comes in contact. It does not produce these effects of itself, as a Sacrament does, but it obtains actual graces for the pious user, which will, if he is well disposed, produce them. The same applies to the efficacy of the water. The formula of prayer used for the blessing of the water implores the following effects for it: 1st, To drive away the devils; 2nd, To cure diseases; 3rd, To free houses and their contents from all evil, particularly from a plague-infected atmosphere. After the prayers the priest puts a little salt into the water three times, in the form of a cross, saying: "May this commingling of salt and water be made in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." The union of salt and water is not without mystery. The property of the former is to preserve, of the latter to cleanse. The Church wishes that this sacramental should help to wash away sin from her children, and to preserve them from relapse. Water naturally quenches fire and fosters the growth of plants; hence in the spiritual order, water serves to quench the fire of the passions and to promote the growth of virtues. Salt is the symbol of wisdom; it typifies the Eternal Wisdom, the second Person of the Blessed Trinity. Water represents human nature.

Hence the mingling of the two substances is emblematic of the Incarnation, of the assumption of human nature by the Eternal Word. Water represents repentance for past offenses; salt represents the care which the true penitent takes to avoid future relapses.

302. *Q. Are there other sacramentals besides the sign of the cross and holy water?*

A. Besides the sign of the cross and holy water there

are many other sacramentals, such as blessed candles, ashes, palms, crucifixes, images of the Blessed Virgin and of the saints, rosaries, and scapulars.

There are many more sacramentals, besides those here given by the Catechism, but these are the principal ones used among Catholics.

Blessed Candles. The use of lights in the Jewish temple is well known, and if they were appropriate in the ceremonies of the worship which was but the shadow of the better things that were to come, much more appropriate are they in that worship which is the reality. The best authorities on the liturgy maintain that the use of lights during the celebration of the divine mysteries is of Apostolic origin. Light is the fittest and most appropriate symbol of God, the absolutely pure spirit. Light also represents the mission of our divine Lord upon earth, for He is the true "Light, which enlighteneth every man that cometh into the world." Christ says of Himself: "I am the light of the world." The candles to be blessed should be of beeswax. The lighted wax candle is one of the most impressive figures of Christ. As the virgin bee gathers pure wax from the flowers, so did Jesus assume His pure body in the womb of the Flower of Nazareth. Even as a bright flame glitters from the pure wax candle, so did the divinity of Jesus shine forth in His doctrine, life and miracles. The solemn blessing of the candles takes place in the Church on the feast of the Purification, forty days after the birth of our Lord. Several reasons may be adduced why the Church so prescribed it. The Church in blessing the candles begs God to protect in a particular manner those who desire to carry these candles in their hands, that they may deserve to be presented in the temple of glory, that they may be free from the blindness of every sin, that they may discern those things which are pleasing to God and profitable to salvation; that the interior light of the Holy Ghost may never be wanting in their soul, but on the contrary that, enlightened by the same Holy Spirit, they may truly acknowledge and faithfully love the divine Redeemer. The faithful in general have caught the spirit of the Church with regard to her blessed candles, and look upon them as one of the most efficacious of the sacramentals. They light them in times of danger, especially from the elements; they desire

to have the dying expire while holding a blessed candle in the hand; the material light is thus made a symbol of the invisible light that is to guide them after death to the realms of everlasting happiness.

Ashes. The use of ashes, especially the sprinkling of ashes on the head as a sign of humiliation and sorrow, dates back to the cradle of the human race. The Ninivites at the preaching of Jonas "proclaimed a fast, and put on sackcloth from the greatest to the least, and sat in ashes." And the prophet Jeremias cries out: "Howl, ye shepherds and cry: and sprinkle yourselves with ashes, ye leaders of the people." Conscious that he is by nature a child of wrath, man strives to appease our offended God by the practice of penance and mortification; and, remembering that he is formed of the dust of the earth, and doomed to return to it again, he humbly sprinkles the noblest of his members, the head, with dust. In the light of revelation this is perfectly natural to him. The ceremony of blessing and distributing the ashes on Ash-Wednesday comes down to us from the earliest ages. The ashes used for this ceremony are procured from the burning of the blessed palms of the previous Palm-Sunday. In the prayers for the blessing of the ashes the Church beseeches Almighty God "to spare the penitent sinners who invoke Him, and to send His holy Angel from heaven to bless and sanctify these ashes, that they may become a salutary remedy for all who invoke His Holy name, and who, conscious of their transgressions, call upon His loving kindness; and to grant to all upon whom they are sprinkled health of body and salvation of soul." On signing each one with ashes on Ash-Wednesday, the priest says: "Remember, man, that thou art dust, and into dust thou shalt return."

Palms. The blessing and carrying of palms in procession on Palm-Sunday derives its origin from the action of the people of Jerusalem in going to meet our Saviour on the Sunday before He died, and conducting Him in triumph into the city. Turning to the Sacred Scriptures, we find the bearing of palm branches to have been one of the principal ways of manifesting joy, and one not only approved but commanded by God at the time of the foundation of the Jewish religion. See Leviticus 23:40. The martyrs are represented among the blessed carrying palms in their hands (Apoc. 7:9). The palm is admirably adapted

to symbolize. It is emblematic of the overshadowing power of divine Providence, the strength of supernatural grace, and the nourishment which our Saviour gives us in the Holy Eucharist. The custom of blessing palms is admitted to be of ancient origin. It rests on the general principle that whatever is used by the people of God in His service, should first be sanctified by the blessing of the Church. The blessing of the palms is one of the most solemn of the Catholic Ceremonial. The palm is the symbol of victory; like our divine Redeemer, we must gain it by humbling ourselves.

Crucifixes. From the very origin of Christianity the cross became the symbol of hope, an object of religious veneration, and later on it became also one of the most common ornaments among the faithful. After the discovery of the true cross in the year 326 by St. Helena, the mother of the Emperor Constantine, that monarch issued a decree forbidding the cross to be used in the execution of criminals. From that time the veneration which the Christians had shown it in secret from the beginning, received a fresh impulse; and since that auspicious day nothing is more characteristic of the followers of Christ than the veneration they entertain for the sacred instrument of man's redemption.

Images of the Blessed Virgin and the Saints. The honor paid to the images of the Blessed Virgin and the saints dates back to the first ages of Christianity. The oldest image of the Blessed Virgin is attributed to the Evangelist St. Luke. "We must," says St. John Damascene, "honor the saints as the friends of God, the children and heirs of Jesus Christ, because they are our protectors and intercessors; we must build temples in their honor, celebrate their memory by the singing of psalms and spiritual canticles, erect to them statues and keep their images." The Church authorizes the honor paid to sacred images, because she recognizes their usefulness. The Fathers of Trent say: "Great benefit is derived from sacred images, because they place before the eyes of the faithful the wonders God has wrought by the saints, the salutary examples set us by them, that the faithful may with thanksgiving take them for their models of life and conduct, and that they may thereby be induced to adore and love God." St. Gregory the Great says: "Images are the books of the ignorant; we place

them in our churches, that those who cannot read may see on the walls what they cannot learn from books."

Rosaries. In the Roman Ritual formulas of blessing are given for various rosaries or chaplets, such as those of St. Bridget, of our Lord, of St. Joseph, of the Precious Blood, of the seven Dolors, of the Blessed Virgin Mary, of the Blessed Trinity. We will here simply treat of the Rosary most commonly used among Catholics, that of the Blessed Virgin. We owe the origin of the Rosary in its present form to St. Dominic, but the idea did not originate with him. The custom of repeating the same form of prayer, whether of praise or petition, is of great antiquity, and is natural to man, especially when he is under the influence of a strong emotion. Our Lord set the example in the garden of olives the night before He died. The frequent repetition of the same prayers, the desire of the faithful to say a certain number every day, would naturally suggest some simple means of counting them. The name *Rosary* is derived from the title Mystical Rose, by which the Church salutes the Mother of God. In the early times the great canonical prayer was the Psalter, or the 150 psalms of David. Those who could neither read nor recite the Psalter, substituted the Lord's prayer. The Rosary, as we have it now, is properly composed of fifteen decades, divided into five joyful mysteries, five sorrowful mysteries, and five glorious mysteries. The prayers required are 15 times the Lord's prayer, 150 times the Angelic Salutation and 15 times the Doxology; the last however not being essential. The third part of the Rosary or the five Our Fathers and fifty Hail Marys, are also called the Rosary or Beads. We will add the requisites for gaining the indulgences, as laid down in the Apostolic Constitutions for the recitation of the ordinary rosary, that of St. Dominic.

1. Whilst saying the prayers, the rosary must be held in the hand; when, however, the rosary is said in common all gain the indulgences, when joining in prayer with the leader holding the rosary.

2. The meditation of the mysteries of the life, passion and resurrection of our Lord is necessary.

3. To gain the indulgences the five decades should be said uninterruptedly, so, that it be, morally speaking, one prayer.

4. If the rosary be loaned that some one else may gain

the indulgences, it ceases to be privileged for the owner; this however is not the case, if it is simply loaned for the purpose of counting the prayers.

Who will deny that the meditation of the great mysteries of religion together with the Lord's Prayer and the Angelical Salutation is a powerful sacramental?

Scapulars. The Roman Ritual gives the formula of blessing the following scapulars: of the Immaculate Conception, of our Lady of Mercy, of Mount Carmel, of Health of the sick, of the Seven Dolors, of St. Joseph, of St. Michel the Archangel, of the Passion and of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary, of the Precious Blood, of the Blessed Trinity. The brown scapular worn by nearly all true Catholics is the scapular of our Lady of Mount Carmel. We here add a few words about its origin and privileges.

As a garment, the scapular is a broad piece of cloth, with an aperture in it for the head, which hangs down in front and at the back almost to the ground, as may be seen in the habits of the Carmelites, the Benedictines, and some other religious orders. The brown scapular worn by the faithful is a symbol of that worn by the religious of the Order of Mount Carmel. The scapular, as we have it now, the instrument of so many wonders, was the fruit of the prayers of St. Simon Stock. Born in 1164 in the duchy of Kent, England, he retired from the world at the age of twelve into solitude. His life was consecrated to prayer, mortification and the other virtues of a Christian life. After twenty years spent in the practice of a holy life, he received an invitation to join the Order of Mount Carmel, some religious of that Order having just come over from the Orient into England. At his request, he was afterwards sent to the Holy Land, and eventually remained on Mount Carmel. His life there was as a continual ecstasy. There he received from the hands of the Mother of God the scapular with the assurance that those who would die invested with it would be preserved from the fire of hell. In a subsequent apparition the Blessed Virgin promised that those wearing the scapular would be delivered from purgatory soon after their death, in fact, on the first Saturday following it. This is called the Sabbatine Privilege. Numerous indulgences have been granted to the wearing of the scapular, on certain conditions.

1. The scapular must be blessed and imposed by a priest

having the necessary faculty. Once enrolled, the wearer may substitute other scapulars, which do not require to be blessed.

2. It is necessary that the person enrolled should always wear the scapular; it should be so adjusted that one part hangs on the breast and the other on the back, one of the strings passing over each shoulder. When taken off for a while through necessity, the indulgences are not suspended.*

3. To enjoy the Sabbatine privilege, or gain the Sabbatine indulgence; the following conditions must be complied with. To observe chastity according to one's state of life; to recite every day the Little Office of the Blessed Virgin; he who cannot read, must not only fast on the days prescribed by the Church, but abstain also from flesh meat on Wednesdays, Fridays and Saturdays, except on Christmas, when falling on any of these days. Priests and clerics satisfy this obligation by saying the Divine Office. For just reasons, confessors, having a special faculty, can commute these obligations into some other good works.

LESSON XXVIII

PRAYER

303. *Q. Is there any other means of obtaining God's grace than the Sacraments?*

A. There is another means of obtaining God's grace, and it is prayer.

When treating of the Sacraments in general, we explained that they are the instrumental causes of grace. When we claim that prayer is also a means of obtaining God's grace, we do not intend to convey the idea that both prayer and the

* Father Albert Missone, a missionary in Belgian Congo, noticed that the scapulars worn by the negro converts soon became so soiled or torn, that they presented any thing but an inviting appearance. He, therefore, petitioned the Holy Father to grant them the privilege of replacing the scapulars by a medal specially blessed for the purpose, and, at the same time, of gaining the indulgences of the scapulars. This privilege was granted, and has since been extended to the rest of the faithful under the following conditions: First, only those may enjoy such privilege who have been previously invested with the scapular or scapulars; secondly, the medal must be blessed for the purpose by a priest having such power; thirdly, it must be a medal of the Blessed Virgin.

Sacraments obtain for us God's grace in an identical manner. The Sacraments give grace of themselves, often without any dispositions on the part of the recipient; the efficacy of prayer is chiefly dependent upon the dispositions of the one who prays. The grace of God is a free gift; therefore prayer is not the instrumental cause of it, nor can we by prayer merit, strictly speaking, the grace of God. Prayer may in a twofold manner move God to give us grace. First, inasmuch as it is an act of religion and gives honor to God; under this aspect it is meritorious, calling for a special reward. Secondly, being an humble confession of our own helplessness and an open acknowledgment of God's power it is a means of obtaining grace, though not meriting it. The prayer of the poor to the rich moves them to give, not because it is a canticle to their praise, but simply because it is a request. When speaking of prayer as an act by which we obtain what we desire, an exception must be made with regard to the first grace given us, because it is an absolutely gratuitous gift, on the part of God, to which prayer imparts no right. Scripture clearly proves this: "You have not chosen Me, but I have chosen you" (John 15:16), "Not as though we had loved God, because He hath *first* loved us . . ." "Let us therefore love God, because God hath first loved us" (1 John 4:10, 19). The same doctrine is inculcated throughout the epistle of St. Paul to the Romans (8:26): "We know not what we should pray for as we ought; but the Spirit Himself asketh for us with unspeakable groanings." St. Augustine declares it to be a gift of God that we should cry to God with a true heart and in a spiritual manner. How they are mistaken, those who think that asking, seeking, knocking is from ourselves, whereas it is given to us, and who will not understand that to pray is a gift of God, because "we have received the spirit of adoption of sons, whereby we cry: Abba (Father)" (Rom. 8:15).

Prayer, therefore, possesses its power of obtaining its object from the grace of God, to whom we pray, who even commands us to pray. The prayer of the faithful is in its efficacy different from the prayer of the heathen. In the latter prayer is only a negative disposition to obtain grace. In the following pages we treat of the prayer of the faithful. We will here add a few explanatory remarks in regard to the efficacy of prayer. What God grants on account of

prayer and how He grants it. It is evident that there is nothing new with God; from all eternity He has determined what external effects will be produced in time, on account of prayer. God can produce an effect in a twofold manner, either immediately by Himself without the concurrence of created causes, or mediately with their concurrence. In both ways may prayer be efficacious. In His Providence He can so regulate created causes, as to produce the effect, which the prayerful man sought, when He might have ordained otherwise, if He had not foreseen his prayer. In all favors, which are not granted in a miraculous manner, God so disposes natural causes that, with the divine assistance, they may produce the effect prayed for; often do we find an explanation of the efficacy of prayer in the fact that God immediately, by Himself or through the ministry of the angels, produces the effect desired, when the existing physical causes are inadequate. It may not be amiss to distinguish here four forms under which God's Providence manifests itself in regard to prayer. The first we may call the ordinary natural Providence, consisting in this, that God, foreseeing that the effect desired will be produced by natural causes, concurs with these and removes, if necessary, the obstacles placed in the way either by the demons or by human agency. The second is a special natural Providence whereby God, owing to prayer, disposes the secondary causes to produce the desired effect. The third is the supernatural Providence in the manner by which God, on account of prayer, produces an effect, which could not be produced by natural causes, but which belongs to the natural order, as is the case in miracles. The fourth is the supernatural Providence, by which God on account of prayer grants supernatural gifts. God grants to prayer properly made infallible efficacy. Let us hear what Christ said concerning it in His sermon on the mount: "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek and you shall find; knock, and it shall be opened to you. For every one that asketh, receiveth; and he that seeketh, findeth; and to him that knocketh, it shall be opened. Or what man is there among you, of whom if his son shall ask bread, will he reach him a stone? Or if he shall ask a fish, will he reach him a serpent? If you then being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children: how much more will your Father, who is in heaven, give good things to them that ask Him" (Mat. 7:7 et seq.).

To doubt therefore the efficacy of prayer is to deny the veracity of God's promises.

304. *Q. What is prayer?*

A. Prayer is the lifting up of our minds and hearts to God to adore Him, to thank Him for His benefits, to ask His forgiveness, and to beg of Him all the graces we need whether for soul or body.

To pray is to raise our minds and hearts to God. The mere study of things divine is not prayer; neither is the mere thought of them. Prayer, even in its widest sense, is a movement towards God, whereby man raises himself above himself to approach God with a pious sentiment. He prays, therefore, who elicits an act of faith, hope or charity, or who meditates that he may know and love God better. In a narrower sense, prayer is what the Catechism defines it, viz.: to adore God, to thank Him for His benefits, to ask His forgiveness and to beg favors of God. When Holy Scripture mentions prayer, it almost invariably means a request for fresh favors.

Thus Christ in the Lord's Prayer teaches us to request seven favors from God. A petition supposes in the will of the petitioner a desire to obtain; prayer is the manifestation of that desire. We express our desire to God; hence prayer is a conversation with God, which may either be interiorly performed by the understanding and will, or be articulated; in the latter case we have vocal prayer. Speech, however, is not used for the purpose of warning God of our needs and desires. Christ says: "When you are praying, speak not much as the heathens. For they think that in their much speaking they may be heard. Be not you therefore like to them, for your Father knoweth what is needful for you, before you ask Him" (Mat. 6:7). God does not need any information. By prayer we do not pretend to change the divine decrees, but we simply fulfil a condition, owing to which God from all eternity decreed to grant what we ask for; whereas if that condition did not exist, God would have from all eternity decreed otherwise.

Prayer is an act of religion, because by it we acknowledge God's power and goodness, and profess, at the same time, our dependence and helplessness. Prayer, to be conducive to salvation, presupposes, like every other salutary act, the help of grace; it proceeds from faith and trust in God.

"How shall they call on Him, in whom they have not believed?" (Rom. 10:14). "Let him ask in faith, nothing wavering" (James 1:6). As we know not rightly what to ask, the grace of God shows what is desirable and what we should ask. Christ Himself has taught us what to ask, when He taught us the Lord's Prayer. First and foremost we should pray for the glorification of God: "Hallowed be Thy name"—Then the final happiness of man and the graces required to obtain it: "Thy kingdom come"—Further, as God demands the coöperation of man, we ask of Him that coöperation, that is, the conformity of our will with the divine will, "Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven." In regard to all temporal favors, Christ teaches us to ask them, in as far as they are necessary, or in some way conducive to our everlasting happiness: "Give us this day our daily bread." Not only must we pray for the good things, but also that He may remove evil from us, especially moral evil, sin: "Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive them that trespass against us." That He may avert also those temptations to which He foresees that we would succumb: "Lead us not into temptation."—We should not pray that God may extinguish within us the fire of concupiscence; in his Providence God allows it to remain in us to provide us with opportunities of victory. Temptations have their advantages as long as God will "deliver us from evil," past, present and future. We shall say more about prayer when treating of the first commandment.

305. *Q. Is prayer necessary to salvation?*

A. Prayer is necessary to salvation, and without it no one having the use of reason can be saved.

The command to pray is often repeated in Holy Scripture, we should even follow the example and the doctrine of Christ and therefore "we ought always to pray and not to faint" (Luke 18:1). From the words of Scripture we may infer that prayer is not only commanded, but is also a necessary means to salvation for all who have attained the use of reason. The warning to pray that we may overcome temptation, supposes that without prayer temptations can not be overcome. The Holy Fathers argue the necessity of prayer from the necessity of grace; as grace is a necessary means to salvation, so is prayer. They teach that the gift of final perseverance cannot be obtained with-

out prayer. St. Thomas says: "Every one is obliged to pray from the very fact that he is bound to procure for himself spiritual favors, which God alone can grant; in no other way can they therefore be had, except through prayer." The Council of Trent adopts the following words of St. Augustine: "God does not command the impossible, but while commanding, He warns us to do what we can, and to ask for what we cannot do," and the Council adds: "and God will help that we may be able to do it." It seems therefore clear that to keep certain commandments prayer is necessary.

Reason itself suggests that it is quite proper that this necessity should exist. It is plain that man should not be indifferent towards obtaining the most precious gifts of the supernatural order; but that he should do at least what he can; what can he do less than to ask for them? As God is not our debtor, what else can we do than to beg of Him what we need by prayer; prayer is the means He has given us to obtain what we wish.

The question may now be asked, whether this necessity applies to vocal prayer only, or whether also mental prayer or meditation is necessary. Mental prayer is necessary in so far as it is required for the faithful to know the doctrines of faith, and morals, in order to be able to put them into practice. We must know the word of God, before it can bring forth fruit within us. The faithful generally comply with this obligation by hearing sermons or by reading books on religious matters with sufficient attention, and striving to impress upon their mind what they hear or read, and to regulate their lives accordingly.

306. *Q. At what particular times should we pray?*

A. We should pray particularly on Sundays and Holydays, every morning and night, in all dangers, temptations, and afflictions.

Although the natural law obliges man to pray, it does not specify the time when this obligation is to be fulfilled. As God in the Old Testament had set aside certain days for divine worship, so also has the Church in the New Testament selected certain days in the course of the year for that same purpose, and commanded us to keep holy one day every week, viz.: the Sunday. The reason of this positive legislation is found in the fact that an obligation for the

compliance with which no particular time has been assigned, is too easily lost sight of; furthermore as the followers of Christ should occasionally meet for public worship, this could not conveniently be done, unless certain days were prescribed for the purpose. The Holydays during the year are of ecclesiastical institution and can be changed by the Church, and have often been changed. That is the reason why the Holydays of obligation are not everywhere the same. When treating of the commandments of the Church, we will examine the question whether Catholics are right in keeping the Sunday holy, instead of the Saturday. By praying merely on Sundays and Holydays we would not obey Christ directing us "always to pray and not to faint" (Luke 18:1). The morning seems a most appropriate time for prayer. Heathens, like Cicero, had understood that the day should begin with God. The whole of irrational creation sets us the example; all God's works praise Him.

Numerous passages in the Old Law specify morning and evening as the times that we should remember our Maker. "These are the sacrifices which you shall offer: Two lambs of a year old without blemish every day for the perpetual holocaust; one you shall offer in the morning, and the other in the evening" (Numb. 28:3). "In their affliction they will rise early to Me: Come and let us return to the Lord" (Osee 6:1). "That it might be known to all that we ought to prevent the sun to bless Thee, and adore Thee at the dawning of the light" (Wisd. 16:28). Christ Himself set us the example: "Rising very early, going out He went into a desert place, and there He prayed" (Mark 1:35). The liturgy of the Church deeply impresses upon us the necessity and appropriateness of devoting a few minutes of the early morning to prayer. How could we expect the blessing of God upon us and our work during the day, unless we humbly implore it? On rising in the morning, before the cares and anxieties of the day press upon us, we can pray more devoutly; then we can offer our day's work to the Lord, and make it meritorious in His sight. The enemy of our salvation realizes the importance of the morning prayer, and therefore endeavors to throw obstacles in the way.

Almost of equal importance is the evening prayer. What could be more reasonable, than that at least once a day we remember God's favors in our behalf, and tender Him

our sincerest thanks for them? We should not forget that for every act of the day we require God's help, that not only we owe Him our being, but also our preservation. From how many dangers have we not been delivered during the day? Without God's blessing in vain would we work. Gratitude prompts us at night to thank the Giver of all good gifts. In the Catholic home all the members should meet for evening or night prayers; the blessing of one is the blessing of all; prayer in common will more than anything else preserve the true spirit in the home. To this thanksgiving for the day's blessing, should be added an examination of conscience, and a sincere act of regret for our shortcomings. Sleep is a figure of death; who knows whether we shall rise the next morning?

Continual dangers to both our spiritual and temporal welfare compel us to call upon God incessantly for help and protection. Moses of old dreaded the mission to Pharaoh; he foresaw its dangers, realized its futility, pleaded with the Lord to send one better fitted and more courageous. At the command of God, however, Moses yielded, and successfully discharged his mission, putting his confidence in Him who sent him. Peter on the lake of Genezareth, walking on the water at the bidding of his Master, was afraid, and when He began to sink, he cried out to Him: "Lord, save me"; and immediately Jesus stretching forth His hand took hold of him. (Mat. 14:28 et seq.) In God must we trust, because from Him all our help must come. As our spiritual welfare is infinitely superior to all temporal concerns; so is prayer all the more necessary at the time of temptation. God permits us to be tempted for our greater good, and to enable us to acquire and practise virtue, but He commands us, at the same time, to call on Him for help and protection. Scripture shows that temptations against chastity cannot be overcome, and that this angelic virtue cannot be had without prayer. "As I knew that I could not otherwise be continent, except God gave it, and this also was a point of wisdom to know whose gift it was; I went to the Lord and besought Him with my whole heart" (Wisd. 8:21). Temptations, like crosses and trials, instead of leading us away from God, should, on the contrary, draw us always nearer to Him. In afflictions of all kinds the world is often unwilling and generally powerless to help us. The cross is intended by God to lead us to Him; often it may prove

the supreme remedy in the hands of a loving Father to compel us to pray.

307. *Q. How should we pray?*
A. We should pray: 1st, With attention; 2nd, With a sense of our own helplessness and dependence upon God; 3rd, With an earnest desire for the graces we beg of God; 4th, With trust in God's goodness; 5th, With perseverance.

We have said that to doubt the efficacy of prayer is to give the lie to the promises of Christ; nevertheless this must not be understood to mean that God can contradict Himself, or that this efficacy could ever clash with other established laws. Prayer was not instituted to upset the moral order, but, on the contrary, to promote it. Hence lawful order demands that prayer shall not be heard, except under certain conditions. Prayer must have certain qualities, or else it would be an insult to God rather than an act of worship. The qualities of a good and efficacious prayer concern the person who prays, the manner of praying and also the object prayed for. Prayer, to be efficacious, must have for its object something morally good, or at least indifferent, but conducive to a moral good. Christ our Lord has very plainly laid down that condition. By prayer, therefore, we infallibly obtain all favors conducive to salvation; temporal favors may be granted or refused, as they either contribute to or impede our spiritual welfare. God may also deny the favors requested and grant us something better instead: "This is the confidence which we have toward Him: That whatsoever we shall ask according to His will, He heareth us" (1 John 5:14).

The Catechism gives five qualities of a good prayer. We must pray: 1, *With attention.* Prayer is an act of the intellect, demanding naturally that we apply our mind to it, that we think of what we do; we cannot therefore, at the same time, pray and think about something else. What kind of attention is then required that the words we utter may be a true and efficacious prayer? The recitation, for instance, of the Lord's Prayer may be either a sinful or an indifferent act, or it may be a true prayer. It would be sinful, if it were like the prayer of the Pharisees, who honored God with their lips, but whose heart was far away from Him. As prayer is a conversation with God; it cannot be

pleasing to Him, if our hearts and minds are not raised to Him. Reciting the Lord's Prayer might be an indifferent act, if done simply to convey it to memory. It is true prayer, when we comply with the command of Christ: "So shall ye pray." Whence the difference, if not from the intention? True prayer requires that a man be willing to pray and for that purpose use words to convey the sentiments of his heart. Actual intention supposes actual attention.

2. The second quality of a good prayer is a sense of our own helplessness and dependence upon God; in other words, prayer must be humble. Humility is practised by recognizing our helplessness. Asking God for gifts which we consider due on account of our works, would be an offense. "The prayer of him that humbleth himself, shall pierce the clouds" (Eccli. 35:21). Christ has beautifully illustrated the same doctrine by the parable of the Pharisee and the publican (Luke 18:19). The chief source of our confidence must be, not our merits, but the infinite mercy of Almighty God.

3. Prayer to be efficacious, must also be sincere, that is, it must be combined with a great desire for the graces we beg of God. This seems very plain, but the contrary is often the case. St. Augustine tells of himself: "When a young man, I was unhappy and very unhappy, and I prayed God that I might be chaste, and I said: Give me chastity and continency, but not yet. I was afraid that God might hear me too soon, and that too soon He would cure in me the vice of concupiscence, for I preferred to satisfy it, rather than to have it extirpated." A farmer would in vain look for a crop, if he is unwilling to cultivate his field; a prayer to obtain the result sought for without efforts on our part, would be a foolish and inefficacious prayer. Equally foolish is it to pray for humility, if we purposely resent all humiliations offered us; to pray for chastity and wilfully seek dangerous occasions; to pray for meekness and charity, when we insist upon resenting injuries. "We must act," says St. Ignatius, "as if all depended on us, and pray as if all depended on God."

4. Prayer, to be efficacious, must be combined with an absolute trust in God's goodness, excluding all diffidence and hesitation. "Amen I say to you," says Christ, "if you shall have faith and stagger not, not only this of the fig-tree

shall you do, but also if you shall say to this mountain: Take up and cast thyself into the sea, it shall be done. And all things whatsoever you shall ask in prayer believing, you shall receive" (Mat. 21:21, 22). "Let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea, which is moved and carried about by the wind. Therefore let not that man think that he shall receive anything of the Lord" (James 1:6, 8). "Let us go therefore with confidence to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace in seasonable aid" (Hebr. 4:16). Faith and trust in God are, therefore, necessary to render prayer efficacious. We must believe that prayer cannot be fruitless; that God can and will help us. We must lay aside all doubt as to God's faithfulness to His promises.

5. God will grant us what we pray for in His own good time, and, as we know not when that shall be, it follows that we must pray with perseverance. Christ has warned us repeatedly, that we should insist with a holy importunity. He illustrates this by the parable of the man who is overcome by the importunity of his friend and gives him what he asks (Luke 11:8, 9); also in the parable of the widow and the unjust judge; the troublesomeness of the widow causes the judge to take up her case and decide in her favor (Luke 18). Perseverance in prayer is necessary to obtain certain favors. There are gifts, which of their nature or by the ordinance of God, are only granted after a certain time; to these belongs the gift of final perseverance, which can be obtained only by continued prayer. To this class also belong temporal and spiritual favors, the granting of which God defers, that, in the meantime, we may practise by unremitting prayer various virtues. God will instantly grant favors which are necessary for the present, such as: the strength to overcome a present temptation.

308. *Q. Which are the prayers most recommended to us?*

A. The prayers most recommended to us are the Lord's Prayer, the Hail Mary, the Apostles' Creed, the Confiteor, and the Acts of Faith, Hope, Love and Contrition.

Of all forms of prayer the Lord's Prayer is undoubtedly the most commendable, because Christ Himself is the author of it, and because it contains all that we can desire. When

Jesus on one occasion had prayed in a certain place, one of His disciples said to Him: "Lord, teach us to pray, as John also has taught his disciples. And He said to them: When you pray, say: Our Father" (Luke 11:1-4).

Who could doubt but that this prayer on account of its divine origin is not only the most commendable but also the most appropriate to obtain from God whatever we need? Jesus, the eternal Wisdom, knew our wants; He also knew how to address His heavenly Father in order to be heard. He therefore guarantees that by this prayer we shall touch the heart of God. A prayer to God in the words of His own Son must be efficacious. The recitation of the Lord's Prayer is generally followed by the Angelical Salutation or the Hail Mary, a request to the Blessed Mother to present our supplications to her divine Son, knowing as we do, that she, who has found grace before God, will also be heard in our favor. It seems surprising that Protestants could find fault with this so often repeated prayer. Can they reasonably find fault with Catholics making their own the respectful greeting of the Angel, of St. Elizabeth, or the words added by the Church centuries before the garment of Christ was rent by the Reformation? St. Luke in the first chapter of his Gospel gives us the first part of the Hail Mary, verse 28: "Hail, full of grace, the Lord is with thee: Blessed art thou among women"— verse 42 —"Blessed is the fruit of thy womb." The Hail Mary is at once a canticle of praise and a supplication. The Church proclaims one of the fundamental dogmas of our faith, when calling her: "Holy Mary, Mother of God"— and begging her intercession now and especially for the most critical hour of our existence, the hour of our death. All Christians are obliged to know, at least in substance the Apostles' Creed, because they are obliged to know their religion, and the Apostles' Creed is the shortest abridgment of its dogmas. Hence, for fear that they might forget it, and also as a profession of faith in its articles, Catholics frequently recite it, and usually include it in their morning and night prayers. Acknowledging our sins is pleasing to God; it is also an act of humility, hence the advisability of reciting the Confiteor. Faith is a virtue, without which it is impossible to please God. It is not only a divine virtue, being infused in a supernatural manner, but it is also a moral virtue, a habit, which must be perfected by repeated acts. We are positively obliged

to elicit an act of faith in what God has revealed, at least occasionally. Children must elicit an act of faith; when having attained the age of reason, the dogmas of faith are proposed to them and they realize what they must believe in order to be saved. In like manner, non-Catholics when they acquire the moral certitude that the Catholic faith is the only true faith, are bound to make acts of faith. After a falling into heresy or apostasy a positive act of faith is required to be restored to God's friendship. Moreover, we are obliged to elicit acts of faith, sometimes during our lifetime; how often is not strictly determined. To avoid making a mistake, the Catholic makes it a point to include an act of faith in his morning and night prayers. The above reasoning partly applies to the acts of hope and charity. When treating of the Sacrament of Penance we have sufficiently explained the necessity of contrition for past sins, to make it plain that, as we often sin through human frailty, we ought also often to offer an atonement to God by an humble act of contrition.

309. *Q. Are prayers said with distractions of any avail?*

A. Prayers said with wilful distractions are of no avail.

There are wiful and unwilful distractions. Unwilful distractions cannot be sinful, as there is not any consent of the will; they are not even hurtful to the efficacy of prayer, if we give no occasion to them. When our distractions are not wilful, the intention of praying is not revoked, but virtually perseveres. Hence on their account we should not get discouraged or give up the practice of prayer, because even the just and the perfect are not wholly free of minor defects in their actions; for if they are easily committed, they are also easily remitted. Wherefore such defects should not deter us from performing acts otherwise conducive to our salvation. But if, at prayer we wilfully and with sufficient reflection turn our thoughts from it, to busy ourselves with sinful thoughts, or with things foreign to prayer, we sin by want of reverence due to God, and injure the merit and efficacy of our prayer. If our distractions arise from carelessness and because our mind is not in the words we utter, our prayer is not only useless, but also more offensive than pleasing to God. If we were to address our

fellow-men in a similar manner, they would feel offended.

In order not to be guilty of wilful distractions, we should endeavor not merely to attend to reciting or pronouncing the words, but also to their meaning, as attention to the former is rarely sufficient to avoid distractions. Attention to the meaning of the words may either be special, as when we consider the proper signification of the words, or general, as when we consider our words as a conversation with God, our Benefactor and Supreme Master, worthy of all reverence and praise. Special attention is often practically impossible; few only can recite the psalms and understand the proper meaning of the words. Yet we know that they contain the praises of God, and petitions for His assistance; and with a general attention we can make these words our own.

THE COMMANDMENTS OF GOD

LESSON TWENTY-NINTH

ON THE COMMANDMENTS OF GOD

310. *Q. Is it enough to belong to God's Church in order to be saved?*

A. It is not enough to belong to the Church in order to be saved, but we must also keep the Commandments of God and of the Church.

The Church is the congregation of all those who profess the faith of Christ, partake of the same Sacraments and are governed by their lawful pastors under one visible Head. The definition gives us the conditions necessary to be a member of the Church. The first condition is the explicit, or at least implicit profession of the whole faith as proposed and taught by the Church. The reception of Baptism, which is as the door of the Church, is a necessary concomitant of this first condition. The second condition is submission to her lawful authority. Christ founded the Church upon the rock; he who is not on it does not belong to the Church of Christ; he who refuses obedience to the power of the keys, is not of the kingdom of Christ; he, who refuses to submit to the ministry, whereby the mystical body of Christ is built up, cannot be a member of Christ or of His Church; hence he who refuses to obey the ecclesiastical authority, is considered by Christ, as a heathen and a publican. The third condition is to be a sharer in the Sacraments under a lawful priesthood. The Church possesses a permanent right of ecclesiastical communion and participation in the fruits of Christ's redemption through the Sacraments.

These three conditions of membership are not to be found in unbelievers, heretics, schismatics, the excommunicated and the catechumens; therefore they do not belong to the Church. On the other hand, not all those who belong to

the Church will therefore necessarily be saved; the Church shelters many a sinner, for it has the mission to save sinners. This is plain from various parables of Christ. The parable of the net cast into the sea shows that it gathers up fishes of all kinds, good and bad (Mat. 13). The parable of the wedding feast shows that a man entered it without having on the nuptial garment (Mat. 22). Of the ten virgins five were wise and five were foolish (Mat. 25). The incestuous Corinthian was a member of the Church before his excommunication (1 Cor. 5). This has always been the case in the universal Church. Its granary will contain wheat and chaff to the very end of the world. Scandals will come, sinners are suffered to live, that they may be converted; hence the work of Christ and of the Church for the conversion of sinners. Yet the fact of belonging to the Church entails for both just and sinners obedience to one of God's commands. To be saved we must keep all His commandments. "If thou wilt enter life," says Christ, "keep the commandments" (Mat. 19:17). "If you love Me, keep My commandments" (John 14:15). There can be no love of God without the keeping of His commandments. "This is the charity of God, that we keep His commandments" (1 John 5:3).

To be saved, we must also keep the commandments of the Church. "If he will not hear the Church," says Christ, "let him be to thee as the heathen and publican" (Mat. 18:17). Not to keep the commandments of the Church means practically not to belong to the Church.

311. *Q. Which are the Commandments that contain the whole law of God?*

A. The Commandments which contain the whole law of God are these two; 1st, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart, with thy whole soul, with thy whole strength, and with thy whole mind; 2nd, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.

St. Matthew relates (22:35) how on one occasion a Pharisee, a doctor of the law, approached Jesus, and to tempt Him put to Him the following question: "Master, which is the great commandment in the Law?" Jesus said to him: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart, and with thy whole soul, and with thy whole mind. This is the greatest and the first commandment.

And the second is like to this: Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. On these two commandments dependeth the whole law and the prophets." By keeping these two commandments we comply with the whole law. What is meant by loving God with our whole heart, our whole soul and our whole mind? It means to love Him above all, to be so disposed that we are prepared to sacrifice everything, even our life, rather than offend Him. To love Him above all is to wish what in His infinite wisdom He wishes for Himself. His being with all His infinite perfections, and His glorification by creatures. Therefore to love Him we must take delight in His being and in His infinite perfections, and wish His glorification by creatures, and therefore to do all that reason and faith command us to do. To illustrate the general commandment of loving Him above all, He gave us ten commandments, by which He specifically defines what He requires of us. No duty could be more consistent with sound reason. Love has its basis in the lovable qualities of its object, we love best what we appreciate most. The measure of goodness must also be the measure of our love. Reason represents to us God, as goodness itself; the good qualities we perceive in creatures is but a slight reflexion of God's infinite goodness. Therefore if we wish to act reasonably, we must love God above all. By the second general commandment God requires us to love our neighbor as ourselves. We must not love him as we love God, because he has not the infinite perfections of God; we must love him as ourselves, because he possesses the same perfections as we. He is God's privileged creature and His adopted child, if not yet in reality, at least by vocation. Those equal in dignity merit equal consideration; equal consideration supposes equal love. What is meant by loving our neighbor as ourselves? It means that we do him no evil, which we would not willingly endure, and, on the contrary, do him all the good which we wish for ourselves. To find out what our obligations to our neighbor are, we should put ourselves in his place, and examine what we would wish him to do to us. The true love of our neighbor presupposes the true love of ourselves; the model must precede the copy. What we should love for ourselves most, is also what we should desire most for our neighbor. Eternal life and the means to attain it are what is the most desirable for us; it should also be the same for our neigh-

bor. To make it plain that all rational creatures, who are destined to share eternal glory with us, are really our neighbor, Christ illustrated this doctrine in the parable of the good Samaritan. Relative or stranger, friend or foe, every man is our neighbor; no one may be excluded from our love. There would in reality be no genuine love of God, if any one on earth were excluded from our love. In vain would we pray to God to forgive us our trespasses, if we were unwilling to forget and forgive the shortcomings of our neighbor.

312. *Q. Why do these two Commandments of the love of God and of our neighbor contain the whole law of God?*

A. These two Commandments of the love of God and of our neighbor contain the whole law of God because all the other Commandments are given either to help us to keep these two, or to direct us how to shun what is opposed to them.

These two commandments are intimately connected together and contain all the other commandments. "The end of the commandment," as St. Paul says, "is charity" (1 Tim. 1:5). Love is the fulfilling of the law (Rom. 13:10); and if there is a commandment it is comprised in this word: "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself" (Ibid. 9). The law and the prophets stand here for all precepts pertaining to morals. All other commandments depend upon these two, and are strengthened by them; all the others are safe and firm, so long as the foundation of the love of God and the love of the neighbor, is not shaken and destroyed. On these depends the whole decalogue. He, who breaks any of the commandments sins either against God, the neighbor or himself. If one loved God and his neighbor as he is commanded, how could he offend them? How could he sin against himself, knowing that thereby he also offends God? If then by keeping these two commandments charity is perfected and sin is avoided, it is clear then that they must contain the whole law and the prophets. All other commandments depend upon these two, as they give form and purpose to the keeping of the others. That twofold love moves us to keep all the commandments and gives to our works a special form or consecration; all the other commandments tend to the acquisition and preservation of

charity. As the conclusion is virtually contained in the premises, so are all other precepts virtually contained in the precept of love. We will add a few words to explain how the whole decalogue is really contained in these two commandments. The decalogue treats of eight special duties, with which we must comply, if we would live righteously and attain the end of our creation. The first three refer to God, the last five to the neighbor. The first three contain all our duties to God. Reason tells us that we owe our superiors in general three duties; first, we must recognize them as such, respect them according to their dignity, and give them the tokens of respect, homage and service, due to them. This is the summary of the first three commandments. The other five contain our obligations to our fellow-men. A few of these bear to us a special relationship; they are our superiors. All have certain properties that we must respect, viz.: their corporal and spiritual life, their wife or at least their chastity, their temporal possessions and their good name. The fourth commandment tells us of our duties to our superiors, especially our parents; the fifth forbids any attempt against our neighbor's corporal or spiritual life; the sixth safeguards our neighbor's wife, or at least his purity as well as our own; the seventh teaches us to respect his earthly goods, and the eighth forbids us to injure his good name. The ninth and the tenth further illustrate our obligations as imposed by the sixth and the seventh. The ten commandments of God help us to love God and our neighbor and forbid us to do anything to offend them.

313. *Q. Which are the Commandments of God?*

A. The Commandments of God are these ten:

1. I am the Lord thy God, who brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. Thou shalt not have strange gods before me. Thou shalt not make to thyself a graven thing, nor the likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or in the earth beneath, nor of those things that are in the waters under the earth. Thou shalt not adore them, nor serve them.

2. Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain.

3. Remember thou keep holy the Sabbath day.

4. Honor thy father and thy mother.

5. Thou shalt not kill.
6. Thou shalt not commit adultery.
7. Thou shalt not steal.
8. Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor.
9. Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's wife.
10. Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's goods.

The inspired writer (Ex. 20:1) thus prepares the commandments of God: "And the Lord spoke all these words." Moses does not specify that the commandments are ten in number. In several passages, however, of Deuteronomy they are called the ten words, as in c. 4: 13. "And He showed you this covenant, which He commanded you to do, and the ten words that He wrote in two tables of stone." Hence they have always been called the decalogue or the ten commandments. There are differences of opinion in regard to their division. The Protestants, to bolster up their novel teachings, divide the first commandment, as we have it, into two and unite into one the ninth and the tenth. The Catholic division is the only reasonable one. It is evident that the prohibition to make graven things and to adore them does not differ in its object from the prohibition to adore other gods than Jehovah; it is merely an explanation forbidding one particular form of idolatry prohibited already in the words immediately preceding. The two prohibitions have therefore one and the same object. On the other hand, totally different species of objects of evil desires constitute an essential difference; some are directly opposed to chastity, the others to justice; this naturally and logically suggests two distinct commandments; the one forbidding matters that have reference to what is forbidden by the sixth commandment, viz.: adultery; the other to the seventh forbidding theft; each of these forbids the interior act, pertaining to a matter of which the exterior act is forbidden by the commandments to which they refer. The Catholic division is therefore the only rational one.

314. *Q. Who gave the Ten Commandments?*

A. God Himself gave the Ten Commandments to Moses on Mount Sinai, and Christ our Lord confirmed them.

It seems to be an open question whether God promul-

gated the ten commandments immediately by Himself or through the intermediary of angels. In the Old Testament there is no question of such intermediary. According to it, it is Jehovah, who brought them out of the land of Egypt (Exod. 20:2); Jehovah spoke to them face to face in the mount out of the midst of fire (Deut. 5:4). Yet at the time of Josephus, judging from his writings, it would appear that the contrary opinion prevailed amongst the Jews. In the New Testament St. Stephen tells the Jews that they received the law by the disposition of angels (Acts 7:53), and St. Paul calls it the word spoken by angels (Hebr. 2:2). The text of the New Testament does not determine the part of the angels in the promulgation of the law; in any case they do not clash with the Old Testament, because God Himself gave the law.

"The ten commandments the Lord spoke to all the multitude of the children of Israel in the mountain out of the midst of the fire and the cloud and the darkness with a loud voice, adding nothing more; and He wrote them in two tables of stone, which He delivered unto Moses" (Deut. 5:22). The Lord therefore, either directly or through the intermediary of angels, promulgated the ten commandments to the people. God, however, gave to Moses all the other precepts and ceremonies and judgments and commanded him that he should teach them to the people.

Christ subsequently came, not to destroy the law or the prophets, but to fulfil and confirm them. Christ's mission on earth was not to destroy, but to fulfil and to perfect what God had established (Mat. 5:17). He raised the standard of perfection for the moral precepts; the law forbade the ends of sin, Christ forbade the beginnings from which sin springs; murder is the fruit of sin, anger is its root; Christ strikes at the root. Christ fulfilled the prescriptions of the ceremonial law by establishing a far more perfect worship of God, the adorable Sacrifice, efficacious means of expiation, Sacraments truly conferring grace. Christ fulfilled all the other precepts concerning judgments and the government of the people by raising them to a higher order in the hierarchical Church. The shadow was replaced by the reality, truth was substituted for the figures. Hence it follows that the Old Law was fulfilled by Christ and partly abrogated by this fulfilment.

The doctrine contained in it could never be abrogated

but was more fully explained and perfected; the law concerning precepts, ceremonies and rites in general, affecting the Jewish people and prescribing a separate government for them, is abrogated. The sacrifices, for instance, of the Old Testament ceased by the institution of the one Sacrifice of the New Dispensation, of which they had been the figures. The ceremonial and judicial prescriptions of the Old Law are no longer binding. Whether the moral code as laid down in the Old Testament is binding in virtue of the promulgation then made, is a question discussed among theologians. Certain it is, however, that Christ gave to the natural law, as expressed in the Decalogue, a new obligation; we may say that Christ promulgated anew the Decalogue and the other precepts which were to have their full effect in the New Dispensation.

LESSON THIRTIETH

ON THE FIRST COMMANDMENT

315. *Q. What is the first Commandment?*

A. The first Commandment is: I am the Lord thy God; thou shalt not have strange gods before Me.

The moral code as laid down in the Decalogue only partially explains what is commanded or forbidden by each of its principal points; but from each we can easily deduce what need be added, in order to propose clearly each point of the moral doctrine. Some of the commandments are presented in the form of a command, others in the form of a prohibition; none expresses both at the same time. None tells us fully what it commands or what it forbids. Those in the affirmative form tell only of one principal duty; those in the negative form, of one principal thing forbidden. When we examine why God used one form in preference to the other, we are led to believe that God in His infinite wisdom used the one or other form according as the matter commanded or forbidden is the more important, the more extensive, of more frequent application and the more deserving to be oftener called to memory. The same answer should be given to the question, why God speaks of such certain duties and sins in preference to others. A glance at the ten commandments will convince us of it.

The first commandment is proposed to us in the negative form; it forbids to honor or adore strange gods, because

in the days of Moses more sins were committed by idolatry, than by a refusal to recognize God as God by faith, hope and charity; whilst in our days more sins are probably committed by not believing in God, not hoping in Him, and not loving Him.

316. *Q. How does the first Commandment help us to keep the great Commandment of the love of God?*

A. The first Commandment helps us to keep the great Commandment of the love of God because it commands us to adore God alone.

The ten commandments are but the reassertion of the natural law. When God commanded that we should adore Him alone, no new obligation was imposed on the Jewish people, that had not previously been communicated by the voice of natural reason to Adam and the early patriarchs. Honor is proportioned to the excellence of the person we honor. God Himself honors the saints on account of their excellence; we not only honor God, but adore Him on account of His supreme excellence. As there can be no one like to God in excellence, we must, therefore, not give to any one the honor due to God. Him alone we must adore. If ever the word adore or worship is applied to any other being, it is used improperly. The Catholic Church does not give to any one, not even to the Blessed Mother of God, the honor which is due to God. Adoration includes three things: 1st, an act of the intellect, whereby we appreciate the excellence of another and judge that we properly submit ourselves to him and give him proofs of that submission; 2nd, the command of the will so submitting itself and giving a proof of that submission; 3rd, the giving of that sign, which is either external as a genuflexion, or internal as an act of faith. The external act is not an act of adoration, unless it emanates from the soul intending it as such; not every genuflexion is an act of adoration. As we will have occasion to show afterwards, the command of adoring God alone, does not forbid us to give to others the relative honor due to them, as to the saints and the Blessed Virgin. On the contrary, the obligation of adoring God alone, of giving Him the highest honor, on account of His infinite excellence, implies that we honor also those whom God Himself honors. Adoration, being the highest honor creatures can give to the Creator, is also the best proof of the love of God.

317. *Q. How do we adore God?*
A. We adore God by faith, hope and charity, by prayer and sacrifice.

Adoration includes the recognition of God as our Sovereign Lord and Master with complete submission of ourselves to Him. This submission supposes faith in Him, hope in Him, and the love of Him. The virtues of faith, hope and charity are distinct recognitions of the attributes of God. By faith we submit our understanding to God's infinite wisdom and veracity; hope is a recognition of His infinite mercy, of His infinite power; whilst charity, the queen of virtues, recognizes all God's infinite attributes. We may believe others, hope in them and love them, but only in proportion to their subordinate excellence. The truthfulness of others, their willingness and ability to help us, their goodness is only a small reflection of the infinite attributes of God. Prayer to God and prayer to the saints are specifically and most widely distinct from each other. We pray or ask the saints, that they may be our mediators, that they may unite their prayers to ours in begging of God the favors we desire. We do not recognize in them any direct power to help us. Prayer, when addressed to God, is an exclusive recognition of His supreme excellence, of His infinite power and goodness. Sacrifice in the proper sense, such as the sacrifices of the Old Law, or the only sacrifice of the New Law, is the highest and noblest act of religion, and may be offered to God alone. It may be offered in honor of the Blessed Virgin or the saints, but it is never offered to them. It is an exclusive honor belonging to God alone. By the above acts we adore the one true and living God, and begin upon earth the spiritual life which we hope to continue in heaven.

318. *Q. How may the first Commandment be broken?*
A. The first Commandment may be broken by giving to a creature the honor which belongs to God alone; by false worship; and by attributing to a creature a perfection which belongs to God alone.

The first commandment is broken by giving to a creature the honor which belongs to God alone. This is the sin of idolatry. It matters not whether the thing so honored is represented by an image or not, or by what external sign

that honor is exhibited, provided in the intention of the agent, or by common acceptation, that honor means divine honor. Idolatry may be divided into material and formal idolatry. Material idolatry exists when divine honor is given to a creature, but without the interior consent of the will, for fear of death, for instance. This is always a mortal sin, as in the case of a Christian it is seriously opposed to the obligation of professing his faith. Formal idolatry is either perfect or imperfect. In the first case, it means the adoring of the idol, taken to be a god. In the second case, it means that idolatry, either out of hatred of God, or the desire to obtain anything from the devil or from a creature, worships it as God. It is self-evident that in both cases it means a grievous insult to God; the second form of idolatry may be somewhat excused on account of ignorance, whilst imperfect idolatry is simply malice.

To true worship is diametrically opposed false worship or superstition. Superstition may be defined: An unlawful worship of a true or false deity. Superstition does not consist in giving more to divine worship than the true religion does, but in giving it to whom it is not due or in an unlawful manner. Superstition therefore is twofold. The first, by which honor is given to the true God, but in an improper manner. The second when that honor is given to a creature, to which it does not belong. The improper way of worshiping God constitutes the superstition either of false or of superfluous worship. Superstition or false worship is generally a mortal sin, because it is a serious prejudice to the truth and purity of the Christian religion, rendering it suspect of error. Hence it would be a mortal sin for a Christian to worship God with the ceremonies formerly prescribed to the Jews; or to expose to veneration false relics, or to preach false miracles, or to proclaim mendaciously that a certain miracle or history is related in Holy Scripture, in order to move the people. Ignorance or levity might, indeed, excuse in the last and similar cases.

Superstition is also the ungodly use of words or signs and attributing to them perfections or powers which they have not either of themselves or from God or from the institution of the Church. All creatures are for a specific purpose; expecting from them effects, for which they are intended by nature is not superstition; water is intended to cleanse, medicines to cure, oil to strengthen or soften; the sign of

the cross is of its nature a profession of faith and a short prayer to God; penance is the natural means to atone for sin.

Words or signs may receive from God a power, which from their nature they have not. Such are the words and signs in the seven Sacraments, instituted by Christ to convey grace to the soul of man. Thus we explain the wonderful efficacy of the waters of the pond of Bethsaida, the shadow of St. Peter, the handkerchiefs and aprons of St. Paul in curing the sick.

There is no superstition in using the words or signs instituted by the Church for their intended object; because if we must believe that the Church is the pillar and ground of truth, we must also believe that God will give a supernatural power to objects, which the Church has blessed, such as the sacramentals.

Superstition is directly opposed to the first commandment, because it practically means bending the knee to the devil, the arch-enemy of God. Catholics must therefore be on their guard, and not attribute to anything more power or efficacy than it has from nature or divine or ecclesiastical institution. It is a serious sin to act otherwise. We may sin by attributing to a prayer an efficacy which it has not; such are the so-called prayers infallibly guaranteeing certain favors, or threatening dire calamity to those, who refuse to say them. There is a great deal of fraud even in apparently pious things. It is equally superstitious to regard certain accidents as indicative of good or bad luck. As finding a horseshoe is considered a sure sign of good luck; although it can absolutely have nothing to do with it. So people looking upon the presence of thirteen persons at table as a sure sign of the death of one of the guests within the year. It is also superstition to look upon Friday or the 13th of a month as an unlucky day. True Catholics are the least superstitious; neglect of the true religion naturally leads to false religion or superstition. In fact, atheists and free-thinkers are more liable than good Christians to be superstitious.

319. *Q. Do those who make use of spells and charms, or who believe in dreams, in mediums, spiritists, fortune-tellers, and the like, sin against the first Commandment?*

A. Those who make use of spells and charms, or who

believe in dreams, in mediums, spiritists, fortune-tellers, and the like, sin against the first Commandment, because they attribute to creatures perfections which belong to God alone.

We shall preface an explanation of the answer by a few remarks about the relation between Church and science, to show that real science and revelation never clash.

The Church never claimed that it had received the mission to teach mathematics, astronomy, languages and other profane sciences. But the Church, having received together with the Apostolic mission to teach the divine revelation to all men, the command to guard the deposit of faith, holds also from God the right and the obligation to proscribe false science, whenever it wars against revelation, lest any of her children be led astray by shallow philosophy and false science claiming to be infallibly true. Truth cannot militate against truth; real science does not need to be approved by the Church. But mere theories are not science; the Church justly claims the right and duty to condemn these, whenever they are opposed or dangerous to faith and morals. The Church has always encouraged and fostered scientific research; at the head of the list of real scientists figure many of her devout children. So long as the theories of scientists do not interfere with faith or morals, the Church will tolerate them; but when scientists undertake to use their unproved theories as weapons against her dogmas, and thus seek to destroy the faith of her children, she is in duty bound to condemn them as false, as opposed to the divine revealed truth entrusted to her by the God of truth.

A charm is a small ornament on a watch guard, bracelet or the like to avert evil or insure good fortune. A spell is any formula, act or object supposed to have a magical influence or power.

If it could possibly be shown that under any circumstances these things could be the causes of the effects expected from them, there would be no superstition in their use. But if sound reason shows this to be an impossibility, and if such articles lack the sanction or blessing of the Church, their use is evidently superstitious and sinful; and he who expects therefrom effects which they cannot produce of themselves nor from the blessing of the Church, expects them from the evil one, and certainly commits a sin.

Such is the use for instance in the United States of the horseshoe. What relation does it bear to the effects desired? None whatsoever. To use it, therefore, in order to insure good luck, is superstitious and sinful, unless excused by ignorance.

A dream is generally a train of thoughts and images passing through the mind in sleep, ordinarily without the control of the will and the higher rational powers. To say that it is always unlawful to believe in dreams, would be a mistake, as it is clear from Scripture and the lives of the saints, that God sometimes warns sinners in their dreams to amend their conduct, and the like. But before attaching any credit to a dream, we should carefully examine whether the thing manifested is good, whether the purpose of manifestation is worthy of God, etc. We must usually place no confidence in dreams; there is as a rule, no connexion between a dream and future events. Spiritism means the belief that the spirits of the dead in various ways communicate with and manifest their presence to men, usually through the agency of a person called a medium. According to spiritists these manifestations from the spirit world take place at séances in the form of table-rapping, spirit-writing, etc., or, in darkened places, of partial or complete visible appearances of supposed spirits. Spiritism when not a fraud, is a manifestation of evil spirits. The heavenly spirits are certainly not subject to be evoked at the pleasure of a medium. The spirits of the damned are not allowed to have with the living relations, which Scripture and Christian Tradition show to proceed from the demons. We must then conclude that the spirits evoked can be no other than the evil spirits, the demons. It is, therefore, always unlawful seriously to request mediums to evoke spirits, and consult them on the one or other question. It is unlawful even if all intention is excluded of communicating with the evil spirits. Should there be serious reasons to suspect that the mediums are frauds, which generally they are, it may not be unlawful, all scandal being removed, to request a medium to practise his or her trade, for the purpose of exposing him or her. He who assists at such séances, for any other reason, helps the frauds financially, and gives scandal and would certainly commit a mortal sin. The spiritists have now formed a religious sect of their own, and therefore are directly opposed to the Catholic religion;

a reason so much the greater for Catholics to avoid having anything to do with spiritism. Hence the warning of the Fathers of the second Plenary Council of Baltimore, that Catholics should not favor spiritism in any direct or indirect way, and should never assist at its séances, not even out of curiosity. For those who enter the house of the devil, should fear being deceived by his tricks and by some of his votaries.

A fortune-teller is one who pretends to a knowledge of the future and to foretell the events of one's life, or make known secret things, as by palmistry, with cards, etc. The weather forecaster is not a fortune-teller; he bases his forecasts on the certain laws of nature, which under known circumstances bring about certain conditions of the weather; neither is the astronomer predicting eclipses, tidal waves or the like, because he argues from the experimental knowledge he has of the stars. The pretense, however, of predicting future events dependent generally upon the free-will of men is against the first commandment, and condemned as sinful, because it is attributing to the fortune-teller a perfection which belongs to God alone. Whence does he derive his knowledge of future events or of hidden secrets? Not from God; because the fortune-teller cannot show proof that he is divinely inspired to know them. Not from his own efforts or ability, because he cannot acquire a knowledge of the contingent future, which is entirely dependent upon the free-will of man, who is always free to act or not to act, just as he wills. The fortune-teller must, therefore, get his knowledge, if he has any, from the evil spirit. As a rule, however, the fortune-teller is a mere fraud, departing for greener pastures before events can disprove his prophecy. All the above as well as other forms of superstition are condemned in the following words of Deuteronomy: "Neither let there be found any one among you that consulteth sooth-sayers, or observeth dreams and omens, nor charmer, nor any one that consulteth pythonic spirits, or fortune-tellers, or that seeketh the truth from the dead. For the Lord abhorreth all these things" (Deut. 18:10).

To the above forms of superstition may be added *table tipping*, hypnotism, faith cure, Christian Science, and other isms.

Table tipping is the act of causing one or more tables to tip, turn or move about, apparently without the application

of any physical cause. By raps or other movements they are made to answer questions, the truth of which is entirely unknown to the actors. If the physical contact of one or more persons with a piece of wood can convey to it a knowledge which none of them possesses, or have it convey such knowledge to them, we might look upon it as a natural event; but what reason is there in admitting the antecedent? The mode of thus imparting knowledge is not only unnatural, but also entirely unworthy of God. We therefore conclude that it may not be exempt from devilish intervention, for the purpose of fostering anxiety, detraction and calumny, dissension in families, and loss of faith and salvation.

Hypnotism is an artificially induced somnambulistic state in which the mind becomes passive, acting readily upon suggestion and direction. In the hypnotic state certain ordinary and extraordinary phenomena are noticeable. The ordinary phenomena are that the hypnotized person seems to be entirely dependent on the manipulator, whilst he does not see or hear others; he holds all the hypnotizer's assertions for truth and seems to hear, see, smell, etc., according to the hypnotizer's suggestion; he seems deprived of all freedom and wholly incapable of acting contrary thereto. The extraordinary phenomena are suggestions which will only take effect after a long time, apparent change of personality, knowledge of the future, etc. The Church does not condemn hypnotism in so far as medical science may look upon it as a natural means to obtain certain lawful effects. All other effects are objectionable. The Church certainly condemns it in so far as preternatural or immoral effects are sought from it. Considering that the hypnotized person places himself at the bidding and in the power of the hypnotizer, it is obviously illicit to submit or bring about such a state without a serious reason, and without due safeguard. To look to hypnotism for preternatural effects is rank superstition and grievously sinful.

Faith-cure and Christian Science are two modern abuses of Christianity and science. These appellations are misnomers. There is a faith that removes mountains, but it is not the faith of an apostate or an unbeliever. The Christian Science theory is also a misnomer, as it is neither Christian nor Science. Catholics therefore must not place any reliance upon either, and not be guilty of abetting errors

destructive of the Christian faith, and even of science itself.

320. *Q. Are sins against faith, hope, and charity also sins against the first Commandment?*

A. Sins against faith, hope, and charity are also sins against the first Commandment.

Sins against faith, hope and charity are necessarily against the first commandment, because they are directly opposed to the duties and obligations it imposes. The first article of the Christian religion, as also the first commandment of revealed religion, is belief in God. This is the first step of the soul towards God; without it, it is impossible to please God. Our love of God would not be a reasonable act, unless by faith we recognize Him as our Creator and Supreme Good; we could not give Him exclusive honor, unless we believed Him to be the one only God; we could not trust in His revelation, unless we knew that He is infinitely true. Any sin therefore against faith is a direct detraction of God's infinite attributes and a transgression of the obligations imposed by the first commandment. Sins against hope are a practical denial of God's infinite love or justice, and as such are opposed to the first commandment. Sins against charity are equally opposed to the first commandment, because the very idea we have of God, as our Sovereign Good and last end, obliges us to love God with all our heart, and our fellow-men, the image of God, as ourselves; God does not consider our love for Him to be genuine and sincere, unless it is accompanied by the love of our neighbor. Every sin against the love we owe God or our neighbor is a sin against the first commandment, because it is a practical denial or refusal of the primary obligation it imposes upon us.

321. *Q. How does a person sin against faith?*

A. A person sins against faith, 1st, By not trying to know what God has taught; 2d, By refusing to believe all that God has taught; 3d, By neglecting to profess his belief in what God has taught.

1. Not to try to know what God has taught is practical indifferentism. Too many unfortunately think that it is immaterial what religion they profess, or even whether they profess any at all. We have often had occasion to point

out how unreasonable this spirit of indifferentism really is. Reason tells man that as a rational creature he owes certain duties to his Creator. These duties are not left to his choice or approval; they are entirely independent of him. Reason then suggests that he should try to find out his duties, that he should honor his Creator as the Creator Himself may prescribe. Man, endowed by God with the gift of understanding, is bound to embrace truth and discard error. How can it be indifferent to man whether he profess truth or falsehood in the most important of all affairs, religion? If there is a true religion, it is his duty to embrace it. It is immaterial to us what religion our forefathers may have professed; their religious opinions may not be sufficient guarantee to us. We have refuted the objection of those who claim that all religions are good, that all lead man to a good life. God cannot contradict Himself; consequently, if we do not believe or admit all He has revealed, we are in error. He who is indifferent and does not try to find out what God has taught, practically refuses to give to God the honor due to Him; and, therefore, sins against the first commandment.

2. To refuse to believe all that God has taught is evidently against the first commandment, because instead of recognizing God as the Sovereign Truth, it gives Him the lie, or raises the standard of revolt against His teaching. Man errs greatly whether he rejects all that God has taught, or simply rejects only a part of it, because in either case he attacks the veracity of God. To refuse to accept one single point of what God has taught, is the deathblow of faith. This sin may manifest itself in various ways. It may be the sin of the infidel, who has some ideas of religion, but culpably neglects to enquire further, or rejects the faith after it has been sufficiently proposed to him. It may be the sin of the heretic, who after having received the gift of faith, stubbornly or otherwise refuses to accept the one or other of its teachings. Or it may be the sin of the apostate, who, having belonged to the true faith, abandons it to swell the ranks of heresy or infidelity. Their sin is grievous in proportion to the light they have received and their resistance to it. Therefore before God the infidel who has never received the gift of faith, will be more excusable than the heretic or the apostate; and the apostate is more guilty than the heretic.

3. It is clearly against the first commandment to neglect

to profess our belief in what God has taught, because the gift of faith is given us by God for a purpose, and He demands that we profess our faith. This is the first duty of the Christian. We are told by St. James that faith without works is dead. By not professing the faith we again refuse to give God the honor due to Him; we practically nullify that most necessary means appointed by God for man's salvation.

322. *Q. How do we fail to try to know what God has taught?*

A. We fail to try to know what God has taught by neglecting to learn the Christian doctrine.

We have often had occasion to remark that faith is one of the greatest gifts of God; in fact, it is the one without which an adult cannot please God. Faith is a light from above which enables us firmly to believe the truths God has revealed and which the Church teaches us as such, whether they be contained in Scripture or in Tradition. Faith requires us practically to believe all that God has taught, and to conform our conduct therewith. If we fail to practise our faith, to live up to it, we forfeit our salvation, because faith without good works is dead. The Catholic who does not practise his faith, is far more guilty than he who has not the happiness of being in the true faith and breaks God's commandments. He who neglects to learn the Christian doctrine evidently sins against the first commandment, for he shows himself indifferent to what faith teaches and to putting his faith into practice. We cannot possibly lead the life of the faithful, unless we know what faith demands of us. To know *all* that God has taught is the work of a lifetime. This is not required of us; but we must know the principal articles of faith, and the duties God requires of us as Christians and all that God demands of us His servants in our own calling or state of life. We must serve God as He wishes to be served. The teaching Church upon earth has been empowered from the beginning to teach us not only the truths of divine Revelation, but also all that should govern our every day life. The Apostles went forth to preach the Gospel with the identical code of morality and belief that the Church now possesses. As errors arose, the necessary articles were gradually defined both in matters of faith and of morality. So that we have now for common use what we

call the Catechism, or an abridgment of the Christian doctrine. The knowledge of the Catechism is the minimum which the Church demands of her children. She begins instilling it into their minds, when their religious education begins, carries it on in preparation for their First Holy Communion and the Sacrament of Confirmation; daily instruction follows as long as the children frequent the parochial schools; after which it is left to every one to perfect himself in its knowledge. And yet, what lamentable ignorance prevails amongst Catholics concerning even the primary duties of a Christian? After the years of their parochial school life is over, the Catechism is laid aside, and in a little while their religious knowledge weakens; important questions are forgotten, and the failure to regulate their lives according to the Christian standard often finds an excuse in their ignorance of its teaching. He who fails to try to know his duty evidently offends the Almighty, and risks losing his faith altogether, or at least of not paying Him the reasonable homage, which He demands of us. The above will show how great is the guilt of parents who do not afford to their children the proper facilities to know what God has taught, by neglecting to give them the benefit of a Catholic education, without which their faith and salvation are in danger of being shipwrecked. Good Catholic newspapers and books and periodicals may, to a certain extent, replace the Catechism in the family; for they will impart in a more agreeable manner the knowledge of the various doctrines and duties of our faith.

The Catholic layman should realize that ignorance, on his part, in matters of religion is not only hurtful to himself, but is also a positive stumbling-block for his non-Catholic neighbor. The knowledge of a thing must precede its love; love of religion will be intensified by the greater knowledge.

323. *Q. Who are they who do not believe all that God has taught?*

A. They who do not believe all that God has taught are the heretics and infidels.

We call heresy a doctrine directly opposed to a dogma of divine revelation proposed to us by the Church, the pillar and ground of truth. A Catholic or a baptized Christian, having as such received the gift of faith, becomes a *material* heretic by unconsciously adhering, that is, without knowing

it, to a doctrine opposed to faith; he becomes a *formal* heretic by knowingly and wilfully, and consequently obstinately, adhering to such doctrine. When Jesus Christ sent His Apostles to preach the Gospel, He imposed upon their hearers the obligation of believing, if they would be saved: "He that believeth not, shall be condemned" (Mark 16:15). It is easy for any one who has a clear idea of God, of man, of their mutual relations, and the value of revealed truth, to understand this divine and necessary intolerance. The Apostles hated heresy as their Master hated it. St. John sees in it the work of Antichrist (1 John 4:3), and forbids the Christians to receive or salute a heretic (2 John 10). St. Jude scourges them unmercifully (Jude 12). St. Paul delivers them up to Satan (1 Tim. 1:20).

The charge of formal heresy can apply to him who has received the true faith. Hence a Jew or an unbeliever would not be termed a heretic, however much his belief were at variance with the true faith. The term almost exclusively applies to a Catholic who has lost the faith, or to an educated non-Catholic, who, knowing the truth, will not admit it. He is guilty of heresy, whether he denies his faith in its entirety, or whether he pertinaciously disbelieves one of its dogmas only. In either case, he would be guilty of a mortal sin, as his unbelief is a positive insult to God's wisdom and veracity. As faith must exclude all doubt, we sin against it by calling any dogma into question, for this is doubting divine revelation. There is no essential difference of guilt between the various heresies; whether one admits with the Baptist the uselessness of baptism for an infant, justification by faith alone with the Methodist, or the decree of God as to our eternal destiny, without any regard to our works, with the Presbyterian, or the fallibility of the Church and Pope with the Anglican, it is the shipwreck of faith, causing the same disaster to the soul.

Infidelity generally speaking is the absence of faith in the man who has never been baptized. There are three kinds of infidelity. The first, or formal infidelity, is the absence of faith in one to whom it has been sufficiently proposed and who positively rejects it. The second, or material infidelity, is the absence of faith in one who has never heard anything about the true religion, or has not heard sufficiently about it to induce him to believe, although on this account he may be obliged in conscience further to

enquire. The third, or privative infidelity, is the absence of faith in one who neglects to acquire an idea of faith, when the opportunity offers. The first kind of infidelity is of itself a very grievous sin, because it explicitly contains contempt for the authority of God, who reveals. The second, when combined with invincible ignorance, is not a sin, rather a punishment of sin. The guilt of the third kind of infidelity must be measured by the greater or less negligence in enquiring. When the infidel perceives any reasons why he should enquire, and fails to do so, he certainly does not perform his duty to God by persisting in his unbelief, which his reason then tells him may possibly be erroneous.

324. *Q. Who are they who neglect to profess their belief in what God has taught?*

A. They who neglect to profess their belief in what God has taught are all those who fail to acknowledge the true Church in which they really believe.

The first step in the moral and generally speaking, the intellectual decadence of a Catholic is his neglect to profess his religion. Never has it been heard that a practical Catholic has become a heretic or an infidel. He must first live in contradiction with his belief, before he can abandon it; his many acts of transgression of his duty may then be punished by God leaving him to himself, and depriving him of those special helps, which contribute to strengthen his faith every time he acts up to it. The Church, as we have remarked before, is the embodiment of Christianity. In vain would man try to believe in Christianity, and work at his salvation out of the Church. Jesus Christ has made it very plain that He attaches the same importance to hearing the Church as to hearing Himself. If man submits not to its teaching and will not profess its faith, he is a greater criminal than if he had positively refused to receive it. Once in possession of revealed truth, man has no longer the right to renounce it, to call it into question or expose it to danger. The Catholic is fully aware that God speaks to him through the instrumentality of the Church, that God requires of him positive service and that faith without good works is dead. The mere interior belief without the corresponding acts will not save him. We are occasionally obliged to make an open profession of our faith. What could it benefit a man to believe that the Sunday should be

kept holy, that penance is a command binding on all, that penance and Holy Communion are the ordinary means of salvation for adults, etc. if he misses Mass every Sunday, eats meat on Friday, and never goes to confession or Holy Communion? Human respect or earthly consideration will not save him.

325. *Q. Can they who fail to profess their faith in the true Church in which they believe expect to be saved while in that state?*

A. They who fail to profess their faith in the true Church in which they believe cannot expect to be saved while in that state, for Christ said: "Whoever shall deny Me before men, I will also deny him before My Father who is in heaven."

It is always unlawful to deny the true faith or profess a false creed, whether it be done explicitly, as by words or signs; or implicitly by any act or omission, which, under the circumstances and according to common estimation, would be equivalent to a denial of the faith. In either case the offender commits a mortal sin; because he, who is ashamed of showing himself as a servant of the divine Master, is guilty of a supreme insult towards Him; he breaks the close ties uniting the creature to the Creator. No wonder that Christ should say: "He that shall deny Me before men, I will also deny him before My Father, who is in heaven" (Mat. 10:33). It may, however, occasionally, be lawful to dissimulate one's faith, even though circumstances might seem to require an open profession of it, provided that in such cases no scandal be given and that there be a valid reason, the fear, for instance of a serious evil. Dissimulation is always unlawful, when silence or tergiversation is equivalent to a denial or to a cowardly shame. It would be considered as such when a dissimulating answer is given to the enquiry of one in public authority, unless the law denies the enquirer the right to meddle with the conscience of the citizen. When the question is put by a private individual as to one's religious affiliation, a dissimulating answer would not amount to a denial, if it means contempt for the busybody and a warning to mind his own business. It would not be a sin against the command of professing our faith, if, to avoid serious vexations, we eat meat on Friday; because such action does not amount to

a denial of the faith, and moreover, the laws of the Church are not binding when their observance is combined with very great inconvenience. The Catholic must appear as such, not only in private life, but in his political and commercial dealings as well. It seems almost impossible that a Catholic can, for a long time, be looked upon as a non-Catholic, without a denial of faith on his part. Fortunately, the world does not seem to have any more respect for the pharisee now than at the time of our Saviour.

A Catholic is guilty of a mortal sin, not only when he bends the knee to an idol, but also, when he takes part in false worship. The Catholic believes that the various non-Catholic denominations have no longer a lawfully ordained priesthood and that consequently their religious services are false worship; the Catholic, by taking part in them or in those of schismatics, practically denies his faith. The Catholic Church, therefore, forbids all participation in any strictly religious ceremony or service of non-Catholics, such as baptism or the Lord's Supper. The case is different when a Catholic enters a Protestant Church whether out of curiosity, or to assist at a funeral out of civil courtesy, because no profession of faith is involved in either. It is probably no sin for a Catholic to be present at a Protestant service, when his presence is demanded by the laws of the land, as a question of order, not as a favor to a Protestant creed; such is the case of a Catholic sailor in the United States Navy or of a Catholic convict in a penitentiary. Assisting at a sermon or lecture in a Protestant place of worship, is not so innocent for a Catholic; it is a sign of cowardice and weak faith on his part voluntarily to go to listen to false doctrines, or perhaps to hear his faith and Church villified without resenting it; it would be ungentlemanly for him to cause a disturbance; and dangerous to his faith by exposing it to wilful attacks.

326. *Q. Are we obliged to make open profession of our faith?*

A. We are obliged to make open profession of our faith as often as God's honor, our neighbor's spiritual good, or our own requires it. "Whosoever," says Christ, "shall confess Me before men, I will also confess him before My Father who is in heaven."

Every Christian is occasionally obliged to make an ex-

ternal profession of faith. "With the heart we believe unto justice," says St. Paul, "but with the mouth confession is made unto salvation" (Rom. 10:10). This obligation rests on the social life of the faith in the Church, which is necessarily an external and visible society. The visible union which Christ willed should exist between the members of His Church cannot exist, unless the members give outward signs of their being members of Christ's mystical body, by publicly professing together the same faith, and assisting at the prescribed religious services. To fail in this is surely a grievous offense against our divine Master, and a scandal to our fellow-Catholics. Practically we comply with the obligation of externally professing our faith, if we fulfil the various duties of a Christian life. There are, however, occasions when a formal profession is required, that is, when God's honor or the spiritual welfare of our neighbor requires it. The first case obtains when such omission to profess the faith would considerably lessen with the heathen the exalted idea of God or of His religion, or deprive God of the great honor, which in those circumstances would be given Him. Such cases are not of frequent occurrence. Our neighbor's spiritual good may sometimes demand of us an external profession of our faith; but it is binding under pain of mortal sin only on such occasions as would give great scandal, or be the cause of others falling away from the faith, or prevent the conversion of unbelievers or other non-Catholics. A good Catholic, however, will not ask so much what he is bound under pain of mortal sin to do, but rather what will promote his spiritual interests. He should remember that each repeated act of a virtue strengthens it, and calls for a special reward. "Every one," says Christ, "that shall confess Me before men, I will also confess him before My Father who is in heaven" (Mat. 10:32).

327. *Q. Which are the sins against hope?*

A. The sins against hope are presumption and despair.

The material and primary object of hope is eternal happiness; the help of God, without which eternal happiness cannot be obtained, is the secondary material object. The formal object of hope is probably to be found in God's goodness and omnipotence combined with His faithfulness to His promises. The certainty of obtaining eternal happiness

with the help of God does not preclude the need of working out our salvation with fear and trembling, because we know that by abusing our liberty we may lose the crown. Hope, like faith, must be strengthened by repeated acts. It is plain that in order to be saved, an adult must occasionally elicit an act of hope; because man must reach his supernatural end by the merits which the help of God enables him to acquire; and he cannot reasonably induce himself to work for that end, unless he hopes for eternal happiness and the help of God necessary to acquire it. The command of eliciting an act of hope obliges primarily on the following occasions: 1st, when man attains the use of reason, because it will not be long before an occasion occurs, on which he will have to put his trust in God. 2nd, When assailed, by temptation against hope, which cannot otherwise be repelled. 3rd, After an act of despair, as otherwise it cannot be forgiven. An act of hope must also be elicited when a temptation against any other virtue cannot otherwise be dispelled; when it is required as a preliminary condition of fulfilling another obligation, such as, prayer or penance. The virtue of hope consists, like all other virtues, in the golden mean; there must be neither excess nor defect; in the first case we have presumption; in the second, despair.

328. *Q. What is presumption?*

A. Presumption is a rash expectation of salvation without making proper use of the necessary means to obtain it.

According to St. Thomas there are two kinds of presumption. The first is the presumption by which man trusting to his own strength attempts to do something as possible, when it is really above his strength. The second consists in an inordinate confidence in God's mercy and power, whereby he hopes to obtain glory without meriting it, or pardon without doing penance. Presumption is sometimes a mortal sin, viz.: when it is of such a nature as to include heresy or blasphemy, as, for instance, if one would attempt to work out his salvation by his own efforts, as Pelagius taught, or would look for divine help in the commission of sins. Generally speaking, presumption is not a mortal sin. We may often be inclined to call presumption, what is no sin at all, or a sin of an entirely different kind. It is no presumption for the sinner, when committing sin, to

hope that his sin may afterwards be forgiven. So, for instance, a soldier who before his enlistment has committed numerous sins is not more guilty because he hopes that he may have an opportunity of going to confession after his time expires, although for the present, he rejects the opportunities at hand. The hope of forgiveness seems to indicate not a very depraved will. On the other hand, one would be guilty of the sin of presumption, if he were to make the hope of pardon a motive of his sin, or would multiply his sins, because Almighty God forgives ten mortal sins just as easily as He forgives five.

329. *Q. What is despair?*
A. Despair is the loss of hope in God's mercy.

Despair, a most heinous sin, is a deliberate giving up of hope in God's mercy. He who despairs thinks that he cannot be saved, because either God will not forgive him the sins he already committed, or will not give him the grace required to overcome his passions. A deliberate act of despair is always a mortal sin, because it very grievously offends God's goodness, and fidelity to His promises. Sometimes, however, the mind may be so perplexed, as to be incapable of a deliberate act; therefore, an act of despair under such circumstances cannot be a mortal sin. The remedy for this horrible thought must be determined by the causes that lead to it. The chief causes are, as a rule, the following: 1st, Spiritual torpor, which causes one to think that the means of salvation are so hard, that he is afraid to make use of them. 2nd, Impurity and other deeply seated vices, which turn the mind away from heavenly things, and which are considered too difficult to be given up, and therefore lead to despair. 3rd, Melancholy or sadness which naturally deprives the mind of the confidence that would otherwise bring joy and peace. 4th, Scruples which oppress the soul. Scruples are, as a rule, only temptations, which, if properly resisted, will disappear; obedience to the judgment of the confessor is the surest cure. For all the other causes the following remedies must be used: 1st, A frequent consideration of God's infinite goodness and mercy. When dark clouds seem to hang over us, our heavenly Father, who watches from His heavenly throne over us, and does not allow a single hair to fall from our head without His permission, and cares for the birds of the air and the lilies of the

field, promises to take greater care of us. He may allow trials and crosses to come over us, but simply for our own benefit.

2nd, A frequent remembrance of the great sinners who have obtained mercy. Why should Cain have despaired, when David, probably a greater sinner, obtained mercy? Why should Judas have despaired when Peter, equally guilty, by turning to His Divine Master obtained mercy? Mary Magdalen, Augustine, both enslaved by the demon of impurity, broke their shackles and were transformed into great saints. There is no reason to despair even after a life of sin, when the last fatal sickness overpowers us; the mercy shown the thief on the Cross by our Saviour should then inspire us with confidence.

3rd, Frequent meditation on the Gospel, on the parables of the lost sheep and of the prodigal son. God wills not the death of the sinner, but that he be converted and live. 4th, Above all, a tender devotion to the Blessed Virgin, the refuge of sinners, will dispel from us the misfortune of yielding to despair. She is our Mother. As long as there is a soul on earth to be saved, she will discharge the mission she received from her Son when about to die on the Cross. She is a loving Mother even to the greatest sinner. Why should we despair, when we know that her pleading is all-powerful with her Son; the sinner has cost her too much sorrow, that she, the refuge of sinners, should ever abandon him.

330. *Q. How do we sin against the love of God?*

A. We sin against the love of God by all sin, but particularly by mortal sin.

The theologians distinguish three kinds of love. The first consists in loving a thing not for itself, but only in as far as it is good to us; such is the love people bear to animals, such as dogs and horses. The second consists in loving a person for himself. If this last feeling is reciprocated we have the love of friendship. In the love we bear to others there may be various degrees of appreciation or intensity. The highest love is the love whereby we prefer its object to everything else. Our love of God will be in our appreciation the highest, if we are disposed rather to lose everything, than offend God by a mortal sin. A venial sin does not place us in the necessity of choosing between

God and the creatures. Love may also be intensively supreme, when it causes the strongest feeling in the will. The love which is demanded of us in reference to God, and constitutes the first and great commandment, and is the cause of our justification, must be a love supreme in our appreciation, although there may not be the intensity of the feeling of love we bear to others. Our love for our parents may be more sentimentally intense, than the love we bear to God; though when it comes to a question of appreciation, we must be disposed even highly to displease our parents, if necessary, in order to love God. As the love of God binds the rude and the refined, we are little concerned in the subtle arguments of theologians in regard to the formal object of love. All must equally be disposed in order to fulfil the great commandment never to allow in their minds a deliberate thought as to who must be preferred, God or a creature. A mortal sin is the very contrary of the love of God; and completely destroys the love of benevolence or of friendship to which God is entitled. A venial sin is not so serious an offense. It does not totally destroy love or make us enemies of God; yet, as we have seen before, it paves the way to more serious transgressions. The love of God demands of us that we most carefully endeavor to avoid them.

LESSON THIRTY-FIRST

THE HONOR AND INVOCATION OF THE SAINTS

331. *Q. Does the first Commandment forbid the honoring of the saints?*

A. The first Commandment does not forbid the honoring of the saints, but rather approves of it; because by honoring the saints, who are the chosen friends of God, we honor God Himself.

It is a dogma of the Catholic faith that the honor we pay to the saints, reigning with Christ in heaven, is not only lawful but also useful. That the cult of the saints is lawful and useful is easy to prove; 1st, from Scripture, 2nd, from Christian Tradition, 3rd, from reason.

1. Holy Scripture frequently speaks of the religious cult given to angels, which it does not blame but rather approves. An angel appeared to Josue and "Josue fell on his face to the ground and worshiping, said" (Jos. 5:13). The archangel Raphael appeared to Tobias, and after he made himself known to him, he was treated very honorably by Tobias and his family (Tob. 12:3). Scripture does not reprove them for doing so. The New Testament also treats of the honor paid to the angels. Christ Himself insinuates that reverence is due to the angels: "See that you despise not one of these little ones, for I say to you that their angels in heaven always see the face of My Father who is in heaven" (Mat. 18:10). Now if it is lawful to honor the angels, it must be lawful to honor the saints reigning in heaven, for similar reasons. Scripture does not mention the cult of the saints, because before Christ's Ascension there were no saints in heaven, because heaven was then closed to men. God honors and glorifies the saints: "Whom He justified, them He also glorified" (Rom. 8:30). Who will deny that it is perfectly lawful to follow God Himself in this matter, and consequently, to honor and glorify the saints?

2. Christian Tradition shows plainly that from the very beginning the Church has at all times honored the saints. We find proof of that in the tombs, epitaphs and acts of the martyrs, in the Eastern as well as the Western liturgy, the churches erected in honor of the saints, the sermons of the Holy Fathers in their honor, the solemn decisions of Councils.

3. Reason tells us that the Catholic doctrine on the subject is correct. It is entirely in keeping with sound reason to acknowledge the really good qualities of our fellow-men, and to appreciate them. Who would ever condemn us for showing a civil respect to those in authority, to the rulers of the land, on account of the special excellence which is inherent in the office and its occupant? To act otherwise leads to anarchy. It must then be a sort of religious anarchy not to acknowledge the supernatural excellence of the saints, which renders them worthy of God's friendship, and to deny them those marks of respect and honor that are due to the rulers in heaven.

Again the honor we pay to the saints is right and useful, because it teaches us the relative value of things heavenly and earthly; it reminds us of the fact that all things earthly are nothing compared with the blessings of heaven, that poor Lazarus is a far greater man than Dives honored on earth in his life-time, but now buried in hell. The honor given the saints is a most powerful incentive to the practice of virtue; we are able to acquire by a virtuous life, conformably to the example they set us, the blessing they now enjoy.

332. *Q. Does the first Commandment forbid us to pray to the saints?*

A. The first commandment does not forbid us to pray to the saints.

In the wording of the first commandment there is nothing to forbid us to pray to the saints. We have positive proof of this in the fact that God has often conferred favors on account of the intercession or mediation of others, which certainly would not be the case, if appealing to others were displeasing to God. The Lord was prepared to spare the people of Sodom on account of the entreaties of Abraham (Gen. 18:23). Through the mediation of Moses the Lord was appeased and refrained from doing the evil which He

had spoken against His people (Exod. 30:10). Owing to St. Paul's prayer, God saved 276 men from certain shipwreck (Acts 27). Many similar examples occur in Holy Scripture. God Himself said to the friends of Job: "Go to My servant Job. And My servant Job shall pray for you; his face I will accept, that folly be not imputed to you" (Job. 47:8). Christ Our Lord, in the Lord's Prayer, taught us to pray not only for ourselves but also for others. The Apostles also induced the faithful to pray for others. Now if the living can intercede usefully one for another, with all the more reason can the holy denizens of heaven intercede for their brethren during their pilgrimage upon earth. "If the Apostles and the martyrs living in the flesh could pray for others, at a time when they had to be solicitors for themselves, how much more now after the battle is won and the crown of glory placed on their brow! Are they less powerful now that they are with Christ?" So writes St. Jerome. Moreover Scripture clearly testifies that the angels and saints in heaven pray for us mortals. Raphael said to Tobias: "I offered thy prayer to the Lord" (Tob. 12:12). In the prophet Zacharias we read that the angel of the Lord prayed: "O Lord of hosts, how long wilt Thou not have mercy on Jerusalem and on the cities of Juda, with which Thou hast been angry; this is now the seventieth year. And the Lord answered the angel, that spoke in me, good words, comfortable words" (Zach. 1: 12, 13). In the second book of Machabees (15:11), Judas Machabee relates to the people how in a vision he saw that Jeremias the prophet of God prayed much for the people and for all the holy city, and enabled him to overthrow their adversaries.

333. *Q. What do we mean by praying to the saints?* A. By praying to the saints we mean the asking of their help and prayers.

A man may present his request either directly to the president or the governor, or through the mediation of a mutual friend. Such applications are usually presented after being endorsed by influential persons. In the spiritual world prayer may be offered either directly to God, that He may grant our request, or to the saints that they may add their prayers to ours, in order to obtain from God the favor we requested. In this way does "the smoke of the in-

cense of the prayers of the saints ascend up before God from the hand of the angel" (Apoc. 8:4). In the first instance we offer prayer directly to God, because all our prayers should tend to obtain for us grace and glory, which God alone can give, as we read in the Psalms: "The Lord will give grace and glory" (Ps. 83:11). There is a twofold difference between prayers offered to God and those addressed to the saints. First, we acknowledge God as our supreme Lord and the Giver of all good, whereas we recognize the saints only as friends and intercessors, who pray to God for us and with us. Secondly, we beg of God that He should help us through His own power, while we request of the saints only that they should plead with God for us and help us by their intercession. The manner of addressing God and the saints in prayer clearly shows a vast difference. To God we say: "*Give us, Deliver us, Have mercy on us.*" To the saints we say: "*Pray for us, Intercede for us.*"

334. *Q. How do we know that the saints hear us?*
A. We know that the saints hear us, because they are with God, who makes our prayers known to them.

Some may think that, as the saints are not on earth with us, they are unable to hear and see how we honor them and what we ask of them. If this were true, how could there be joy before the angels of God over one sinner doing penance? (Luke 15:10). We would think unworthily of God, if we were to believe that God keeps the saints in ignorance of those things, which they have so much at heart, since He has so many ways of manifesting to them what is being done by those with whom they are united by perfect charity. The question then is, not whether they hear us, but how? To this the Catechism replies that God makes our prayers known to them, because they are with Him. They know what we do for their honor, because they see God face to face; they have a clear knowledge of it all, because they see it in the beatific vision. By seeing the Divine Nature face to face, they see necessarily all His perfections, such as, His infinite wisdom, His infinite power, etc. Now, in this vision of God's infinite wisdom, they see not only what God knows of Himself, but also of the creatures; in the vision of His power, they see what God can do and has done; in this vision they derive a clear

knowledge of the whole world, because it is entirely dependent upon God. We do not mean to imply that, although the saints contemplate the Divine Nature, they can fully comprehend it or know all things to which God's power and wisdom extend, because it is absolutely impossible for a created intelligence to comprehend the infinite. But we mean, that their knowledge is far more extensive than we can conceive on earth. The Divine Nature, which the saints contemplate is to them as a mirror, wherein they see the whole world, and especially what we do in their honor. There is a difference, however, between the knowledge they have of God and that of all things accidental. From their entrance into heaven they see God face to face in one and the same manner, without any change, whereas they see things accidental only as they happen. No saint is canonized, unless several miracles wrought through his intercession after his death, are clearly proven and beyond all doubt. If any non-Catholic will investigate how absolutely convincing these proofs must be before the Church admits any of her children into the catalogue of the saints, his very reason would compel him to admit their truth. It would be then folly to assert that we invoke the saints in vain, because they do not hear us.

335. *Q. Why do we believe that the saints will help us?*

A. We believe that the saints will help us because both they and we are members of the same Church, and they love us as their brethren.

The communion of the saints does not end either with time or with the earthly life. The bonds of charity bind not only the faithful on earth among themselves, but the saints in heaven with them. Charity goes beyond the tomb. The members of the Church triumphant in heaven are united with the members of the Church militant upon earth through a mutual exchange of prayers and favors. They, the victors of eternity, and we, the soldiers of time, belong to one and the same mystic body of Christ, to the family of the saints, to the city of God. Can it be possible that their happiness should have made them insensible to our sufferings and trials, to our joys and tribulations? Indeed not! Glory does not extinguish love; eternal glory is the triumph of love; the glory of heaven is not the reign

of egotism, but of charity. It is incredible that the Virgin Mother, who adopted us as her children at the foot of the cross of her Son, could forget us at the foot of His Throne in heaven. It is likewise impossible that powerlessness or indifference should break the bonds between heaven and earth, or dissolve the union between the Church triumphant and the Church militant. The triumph of glory is the height of power. The saints reign with Christ in heaven; this certainly does not mean that they have not the right to speak or the power to act, or the influence to obtain favors from God. How again could we imagine that the Blessed Mother, who upon earth by a simple request caused her Son to work His first miracle, should now in heaven find her words powerless, her protection in vain? The blood of the martyrs has not lost its eloquence or power; their gaping but glorious wounds will not cease to plead with God in our favor. The glory of heaven invests the saints with greater power, enkindles their hearts with more fervent love for their struggling brethren on earth. We conclude therefore that with increased love and power on their part, we may not only believe, but be sure that they will help us.

336. *Q. How are the saints and we members of the same Church?*

A. The saints and we are members of the same Church, because the Church in heaven and the Church on earth are one and the same Church, and all its members are in communion with one another.

The Church, says St. Paul, is the body of Christ. In all bodies the members are united among themselves by a reciprocity of services and actions. The one sustains the other, some give of their plenty to others, all share in the same benefits, that is, in strength, health and life. A member that would cease to contribute to the common welfare, or to draw from the common reserve, would languish and cease to live. No member can say to another; I do not need thy services. A perfect solidarity exists between them. In the human body there is a mutual exchange of services; a reciprocal communion of needs and benefits. Christ is the head of his mystical body, the Church; He quickens the whole body; the members are the saints in heaven as well as the faithful on earth, and also the souls in purgatory.

Like the human body, so the Church must have a common fund of strength, health and life, in which all members participate.

The Church is a great family. Its members, moreover, are united among themselves by a reciprocity of services; the weak seek the help of the strong; the strong protect the weak. Name, fortune and health constitute a common fund, wherefrom each one draws according to his merits. The strength of the father protects the mother and children; the love of the mother is divided between the children and the father, the innocence of the children redounds to the benefit of father and mother. The riches, poverty, infamy or glory of the one are the pleasure or sorrow of the others. If one member suffers, all others sympathize. In the human family as in the human body, there is a mutual exchange and inter-communion of needs and benefits. So also does the Church possess a common fund of riches, merits and virtues; a practical sympathy exists between all its members, entitled to a share thereof.

Again the Church is the city built upon the mountain. Among the citizens of the same city there is a reciprocity of services and benefits. The riches of the one benefit the others; the plenty of the one supplies the needs of the others. Each one has, indeed, his own fortune, his own titles; but there exists, besides, a solidarity creating a common reputation, a public treasury, a common prosperity, in which all share. All cannot be alike; the one will be superior to the other in intellectual or physical attainments, but all having the welfare of the city in view, contribute their efforts to its upbuilding and prosperity. Nothing is more reasonable, therefore, than to believe, as Catholics do, that the saints in heaven and the faithful upon earth are members of one and the same Church and are in communion with one another.

337. *Q. What is the communion of the members of the Church called?*

A. The communion of the members of the Church is called the communion of saints.

The communion existing between the members of the Church triumphant in heaven, of the Church suffering in purgatory and the Church militant upon earth, is called Communion of the Saints, by the Apostles themselves, be-

cause it is one of the twelve articles of the Creed composed by them before they dispersed on their mission to convert the world to Christ. The reason why it was thus called is probably, in the first place, because it is the communion of the members of an institution, which has holiness for one of its distinctive marks; secondly, because it takes its name from the nobler part of its component members, viz.: the saints in heaven; thirdly, because all its members have been sanctified by the waters of baptism and endowed by Christ with the means required, that they may all be saints.

338. *Q. What does the communion of saints mean?*
A. The communion of saints means the union which exists between the members of the Church on earth with one another, and with the blessed in heaven and with the suffering souls in purgatory.

339. *Q. What benefits are derived from the communion of saints?*
A. The following benefits are derived from the communion of saints: the faithful on earth assist one another by their prayers and good works, and they are aided by the intercession of the saints in Heaven, while both the saints in Heaven and the faithful on earth help the souls in purgatory.

The Saints in heaven, the faithful on earth, the souls in purgatory, all belong to the mystical body of Christ, to the family of the Saints, to the city of God. This implies first of all union of the members with the Head, Jesus Christ. From the Head flow direction, light and grace into the body. The Father transmits to His children His name, His riches, His merits. The Sovereign Lord preserves to the city order and peace, strength and life. The members of the Church are in communion with the principal source of all grace, with Christ, its Head, whose merits are applied to them.

There exists also communion between the saints in heaven and the faithful upon earth. St. Paul tells us: "God hath tempered the body together . . . that the members might be mutually careful one for another" (1 Cor. 12:24). If this is the natural condition of the body, then the same phenomenon must be produced in the Catholic Church, because we are told by the same apostle that we are the

"body of Christ and members of member." Are there not in the treasury of the Church besides the immeasurable riches, which Christ has poured into it by His passion, also all the merits of the saints? On given conditions this treasury is opened and its contents are communicated to us. As long as we shall be upon earth, we shall be needy members of the Church; our rich brethren in heaven are willing and able to relieve our need. Moreover, by honoring them we increase their accidental glory.

The same reasoning applies to the communion existing between the faithful upon earth. We must all fulfil the law of Christ by carrying one another's burdens. Our Lord has commanded us to pray for one another, to love one another. The prayer and exhortations of the just will convert the sinner, the sinner converted will be a jewel in the crown of the just.

There is still another part of the Church communing with us, viz.: the suffering souls in purgatory. Neither glory nor sorrow destroys the communion of saints. The suffering souls are, like us, members of the mystical body of Christ; they are of the family of saints, secure of eternal salvation, and are living stones in the city of God. They have a share in the common treasury of the Church, in our prayers and sacrifices. Heaven prays, earth prays, purgatory prays, and so purgatory, earth and heaven or the Church suffering, the Church militant and the Church triumphant are united among themselves by a mutual exchange of prayers and merits.

340. *Q. Does the first Commandment forbid us to honor relics?*

A. The first Commandment does not forbid us to honor relics, because relics are the bodies of the saints or objects directly connected with them or with our Lord.

By relics we understand primarily and in a strict sense all that is left of the bodies of the saints; their bodies, ashes, etc,; in a secondary sense all things, which in their lifetime, have been sanctified by their use or touch, such as: vestments, chains, cilices, etc.; all objects directly connected with them or with our Lord. It is self-evident, that we do not honor these things for their intrinsic value; a rational creature does not submit itself to things which are deprived of

reason. But as relics they are considered in the relation they bear to the saints in heaven, and therefore the honor paid to them has for its formal object the saints themselves. A Catholic is obliged to believe that it is a lawful and pious practice to honor the relics of the saints. The Council of Trent declares this, and not without reason, as the following arguments will show.

1. In Holy Scripture we find numerous passages clearly indicating the existence of the cult of relics. In the fourth book of the Kings (13:21), we read that the body of a murdered man was thrown into the sepulchre of Eliseus, and when it had touched the bones of Eliseus, the man came to life and stood upon his feet. A woman who was troubled with an issue of blood was cured on touching the hem of Christ's garment (Mat. 9:20). In the Acts of the Apostles (5:15) we read that the people brought forth their sick into the streets and laid them on beds and couches, that when St. Peter came, his shadow at least might overshadow them and they might be delivered from their infirmities. In the same book (19:12) we read that God wrought by the handkerchiefs and aprons of St. Paul many miracles, "so that the diseases departed from them and the wicked spirits went out of them."

In these passages we see men venerating things belonging to the saints, and attributing to them on account of this relation, supernatural powers, just as Catholics do in the cult of relics, and we see God confirming this honor and belief by miracles.

2. A cult, which has obtained from the very beginning in the universal Church, must certainly be pious and lawful. Now, such is the cult of relics. The zeal of the first Christians in gathering up the relics of the martyrs to bury and honor them; the temples and altars erected over their relics and tombs, the grand and costly reliquaries which enshrined the relics of the saints, are imperishable monuments of this.

3. The Holy Fathers are unaminous in defending this doctrine of the Church. "If we must not honor the relics of the martyrs," says St. Jerome, "we must then judge that all the Bishops are not only sacrilegious but insane."

4. The miracles wrought through the relics of the

saints not only in ages gone by, but repeatedly in our own days clearly establish that the cult of sacred relics is pleasing to Almighty God.

5. Sound reason alone would prove the lawfulness and propriety of so honoring the saints. The bodies of the saints were once the temples of the Holy Ghost and the instruments of heroic virtues, and as such they deserve veneration. Do we not see in daily life that men treasure the things that have belonged to their parents and dearest friends? Is it mere curiosity that brings visitors to the tomb of Washington? Is it not mingled with sentiments of veneration for the Father of our country? The saints have been true heroes; they are our fathers in the faith, they are our dearest friends. Are not all these titles to our veneration? Finally, we honor the relics of the saints, because we believe in the resurrection of the body; we believe that these bones will rise again and being reunited to the soul that quickened them, will be honored and glorified by God for all eternity in heaven.

It would be folly to condemn the cult of relics on account of possible abuses. If notwithstanding the watching eye of the Church, false relics would be upheld to the veneration of the faithful, the error would only be a material one, since the formal object of their veneration is the saints, whose relics they are supposed to be.

341. *Q. Does the first Commandment forbid the making of images?*

A. The first Commandment does forbid the making of images if they are made to be adored as gods, but it does not forbid the making of them to put us in mind of Jesus Christ, His Blessed Mother and the saints.

The following are the words of the first commandment concerning images: "Thou shalt not make to thyself a graven thing, nor the likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or in the earth beneath, nor of those things that are in the waters under the earth. Thou shalt not adore nor serve them" (Exod. 20: 4, 5). From these words heretics have concluded and most non-Catholics of our day still conclude that the making of images is forbidden. Catholics of all times have answered and still answer by making a distinction. All such images and likenesses as are made to be adored and served, are forbidden by the first

commandment. All other images, pictures and representations, even in the house of God, and in the very sanctuary, far from being forbidden, are expressly authorized by the word of God.

The first commandment forbids idolatry. The context of the above words makes it very plain. The words preceding are: "Thou shalt not have strange gods before Me;" and those following: "Thou shalt not adore nor serve them." The intention of the legislator is self-evident. It would be just as natural to prove that there is no God, because that assertion is really made, but by the fool, who said in his heart, "There is no God" (Ps. 13:1). We all, however, admit that God cannot contradict Himself. If then the making of images is here declared by God to be the crime of idolatry, how could He order images or statues to be made? Did not God tell to Moses: "Thou shalt also make two cherubim of beaten gold, on the two sides of the oracle" (Exod. 25:18). On another occasion, the Lord said to him: "Make a brazen serpent and set it up for a sign; whosoever being struck shall look on it, shall live" (Numb. 21:8). On the other hand, our adversaries clearly contradict themselves; they will not object to having in their stained glass church windows representations of the Good Shepherd; nor to pictures, etc., of Abraham Lincoln, etc.; nor to the portraits of their parents and friends, and even their own occupying a conspicuous place in their parlors. All of which, according to their interpretation, would be equally forbidden by the first commandment. The prohibition must, then, be understood with the distinction, that such images must not be made to worship them as gods. No Catholic adores or worships images.

342. *Q. Is it right to show respect to the pictures and images of Christ and His saints?*

A. It is right to show respect to the pictures and images of Christ and His saints, because they are the representations and memorials of them.

The doctrine of the Church on this subject is set forth as follows by the Council of Trent: "Images of Christ, of the Blessed Virgin and of the other saints should be placed and preserved especially in the churches, and due honor and veneration should be paid to them, not because

we believe that there is anything divine or any hidden power in them, for which they should be honored, or that any thing should be asked from them, or that we should place any confidence in images, as was done of old by the heathens, who trusted in their idols, but because the honor we give them, refers to their prototypes, so that in the images which we kiss or before which we uncover the head or bend the knee, we adore Christ and honor the saints, whose likeness they are supposed to be." That we may properly understand the cult of sacred images, it is well to remark that we must distinguish a twofold relation in the images. The first is the relation the image or picture bears to the saint it represents. The second is a relation of the image with all other things that are considered sacred, such as vestments, chalices, books, etc. Considered in the first relation, we must give to the image the same honor, the same cult as to the prototype. In the second case a minor degree of honor is due them, because all sacred things must be treated with respect. We will now prove that the cult of sacred images is lawful and pious. We will admit that the New Testament has nothing for or against the practice; we do not find therein that it is either commanded or forbidden. But we know that not all things are recorded in the Bible. Christian Tradition is equally as strong an argument as the Scriptures. In the catacombs there are numerous images of Christ, of the Blessed Virgin, of the Apostles, especially of Sts. Peter and Paul, and of other saints; these images are very ancient, some of them can be traced to the Apostolic age; they show that their cult obtained even with the early Christians. Julian the Apostate in his day accused the Christians of adoring crosses. The Holy Fathers, the Bishops of the universal Church, have at all times strenuously defended that doctrine, especially against the Iconoclasts of the eighth century, and the reformers of the sixteenth. If there were no other proofs, reason itself would be a trustworthy guide. We pay civil honor to the statues and pictures of great men; hence what is more natural than that we should pay religious honor to the statues and images of the saints? Are they not by far the greatest among the great? Then again images speak to the eye as words to the ear. Images are a great help, especially in the instruction of the young; it is easier for us to acquire correct ideas by what we see

than by what we hear. They also excite us to devotion at prayer, and to the imitation of the saints whom they represent. The legislation of the Church in regard to sacred images affects the discipline, not the substance of religion, hence it may vary, yet always enjoining that they must be treated with respect.

343. *Q. Is it allowed to pray to the crucifix or to the image and relics of the saints?*

A. It is not allowed to pray to the crucifix or images and relics of the saints, for they have no life, nor power to help us, nor sense to hear us.

It is very plain from what we have said in answer to the preceding question that we cannot give any honor whatsoever to crucifixes, images or statues, merely considered as compositions of wood, stone, or canvas and paint, for the simple reason that a rational creature must not and should not pay honor to things deprived of life, power or sense. It would be a foolish act to pray to them. This applies to all crosses, statues, images, etc., even those that we call miraculous, because God should have worked a miracle through their instrumentality. There is, for instance, a statue representing the Blessed Virgin with the Infant Jesus on her arms, which in answer to the salutation of St. Bernard, bowed its head and audibly answered: "Hail, Bernard." This is a miracle, but it does not change the composition of the statue, or endow it with life. Such is the cross on which Christ paid the price of our redemption; it is the holiest of inanimate beings, but it is wood, and merely as such not worthy of honor; but because of Christ, who died on it, it is deserving of our deepest veneration.

344. *Q. Why do we pray before the crucifix and the images and relics of the saints?*

A. We pray before the crucifix and the images and relics of the saints, because they enliven our devotion by exciting pious affections and desires; and by reminding us of Christ and of the saints, that we may imitate their virtues.

The reasons why we pray before statues and images are chiefly the following. First, "the sight of them helps us to pray with devotion; they thus enable us to fix our thoughts on God, or the saints, to whom we pray, and thus

contribute to make us pray well. We naturally think of the things which are the objects of our senses; to consider attentively, we must at least, in some manner, see or hear. As we do not see or hear God and the saints, it is naturally very hard to fix our thoughts on them, because our imagination leads our thoughts astray to the things we see around us. To concentrate our thoughts and prevent our mind from adverting to things that do not belong to the spiritual world, we have the images of our Lord and the saints before us. Secondly, they refresh our memory and put us in mind of things we should not forget. A beautiful statue of the Sacred Heart of Jesus with the heart encircled in flames and with a crown of thorns, surmounted with a cross, and pierced with a lance, tells us at a glance of the unspeakable love of Christ for man. A look upon the cross recalls at once to our minds the mysteries of our Redemption, and the fearful malice of sin. A statue of the Blessed Virgin, with the Infant Jesus in her arms, or crushing a serpent with her foot, puts us in mind of the place the Blessed Mother occupies in the plan of the divine economy. Thirdly, images and statues recall to our minds the victories of the saints over the enemies of salvation. They show us in brief the lives of the saints and the road they followed to heaven. The lily in the hand of St. Joseph shows us the purity of his life; St. Peter with the cross and St. Paul with the sword prove that the saints were prepared to suffer everything, even death, rather than offend God. Fourthly, images and statues, by putting us in mind of God and the saints, act as powerful incentives to imitate their virtues; they tell us that the tribulations of life are nothing compared with the eternal glory, which is to be their reward."

LESSON THIRTY-SECOND

FROM THE SECOND TO THE FOURTH COMMANDMENT

345. *Q. What is the second Commandment?*
A. The second Commandment is: Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain.

The verse in Exodus 20:7 concerning this commandment reads as follows: "Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain, for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that shall take the name of the Lord his God in vain." The Jews in the time of Our Lord thought they could swear by heaven, by the earth, by the city of Jerusalem, by their head. They held that swearing by the temple was not binding, whereas he who swore by the gold of the temple was strictly bound by his oath; that swearing by the altar was guiltless, whereas swearing by the offerings on the altar obliged them to keep their promises. Christ refuted all these false explanations of the second commandment. This commandment primarily forbids blasphemy, as being the worst form of taking the name of God in vain; then also the taking the name of God except in praying, teaching, or on other similar occasions; also swearing by the name of God except under the necessary conditions; and the discarding of promises, made with God as a witness.

All the commandments with the exception of two are given in the negative form, but this does not mean that they simply forbid certain things, without commanding any positive acts. They command the acts contrary to those that are forbidden. Thus, by the first commandment we are forbidden to adore strange gods, but the fact of not being guilty of idolatry would not be proof of our whole duty to God; we must adore Him and serve Him. The difference between a negative and a positive command is, that a negative command is binding all the time, whereas the positive obliges us to certain acts only on certain occasions.

We must never swear falsely, nor may we swear all the time even with truth; but when we swear, it must be not only with truth, but also only in matters of importance.

346. *Q. What are we commanded by the second Commandment?*

A. We are commanded by the second Commandment to speak with reverence of God and of the saints, and of all holy things, and to keep our lawful oaths and vows.

Speech is properly the faculty of expressing our thoughts by spoken words. God gave us the gift of speech for the purpose of expressing our thoughts. The second commandment obliges us to speak of God, of the saints and of holy things according to the sentiments we should have in their regard. We have seen in the preceding pages, that we owe to God supreme love and reverence; hence there is nothing more natural than that we should speak of God with as much reverence as possible. God wills that we should honor and respect His saints, and treat with reverence holy things, on account of the reference they have to God or the saints; to be consistent, we must show that reverence in our speech. The enormity of the sins committed on account of this want of reverence will be considered in the following questions. The necessity of keeping our lawful oaths and vows can be best understood by considering the terrible sin we commit if we break them, as will be shown further on.

347. *Q. What is an oath?*

A. An oath is the calling upon God to witness the truth of what we say.

Men are wont to confirm particular facts with the testimony of others. But the testimony of men may not always be sufficient for the purpose, either because human veracity cannot always be depended upon, or because men ignore many things, such as the secrets of the heart, some of which ought to be known to pass a right judgment in certain matters of importance. Therefore we call upon God as witness in the sense, that he who swears inasmuch as depends upon him, desires that God should manifest the truth of what he says, either in this life or in the next according to His pleasure. That is the reason, why people

in all times and places have placed greater confidence in testimony corroborated with an oath. The taking of an oath may be an act of worship, because by it we profess that God knows all things and is infallible. An oath may also be taken by calling *implicitly* upon God, viz., by calling upon creatures in which the divine attributes shine forth in a particular manner. Such would be swearing by heaven (Mat. 5:34); it would mean swearing by God, because heaven is the throne of God; in like manner, swearing by the Gospel is swearing implicitly by God, whose truth is contained in the Gospel. The calling upon God to witness may be done either by word or act, by raising the hand or touching the book of Gospels.

For a true oath binding in conscience two conditions are required. First, there must be some intention of calling upon God to witness; because taking an oath is a human act, presupposing some deliberation. Secondly, that intention must be expressed by some word or sign. We would not consider it a real oath, if one were to imagine that he swears by using an improper form, such as by my faith, by my honor, upon my word; although he would be guilty of perjury if he were so to swear to confirm a falsehood. If one positively will not take an oath, and the law would require a simple affirmation from a witness on the stand, his affirmation would not take the place of the oath, and his subsequent testimony, if false, would not be formal perjury, although the law might hold him amenable to trial for perjury.

348. *Q. When may we take an oath?*

A. We may take an oath, when it is ordered by lawful authority or required for God's honor or for our own or our neighbor's good.

We are never allowed to take the name of the Lord our God in vain, but there are occasions when we are not only allowed, but obliged to take an oath, and by so doing we are not taking the name of God in vain. There must be some kind of a necessity. That there are such cases is plain from the practice of the Church prescribing an oath, as for instance, for a bishop-elect before his consecration or before he takes possession of his see; or for a candidate to the priesthood who is ordained for the missions. The Catechism mentions different cases, in which there is a

moral obligation to take an oath. The first is, when it is ordered by lawful authority. A Catholic can abide by the law of the land in such cases, and take an oath in all courts where it may be required. But if anywhere the custom would prevail of swearing by the Bible, he is not allowed to swear by the Protestant Bible, for the simple reason that it is not the true word of God; his oath would practically mean: "My testimony will be like this book, which I do not consider to contain the true word of God." In the United States where each one is allowed to serve God according to the dictates of his conscience, there can be no difficulty, a Catholic would in any case be excused from swearing by a Bible which he condemns. The second case when we may lawfully take an oath is, when God's honor requires it. Under this class come all the oaths, which the liturgy of the Church prescribes to her ministers on different occasions. Thirdly, our own good may sometimes justify us in taking an oath. Our word ought, indeed, to be as good as our oath; but, if it should be different with others, and some great loss or gain is at stake, we may lawfully take an oath. Fourthly, what applies in this matter to ourselves, may also be applied to our neighbor; we may take an oath when our neighbor's good requires it; we are usually not so liable to be misled and swear in vain in his case, as we would in our own.

349. *Q. What is necessary to make an oath lawful?*

A. To make an oath lawful it is necessary that what we swear to be true, and that there be a sufficient cause for taking an oath.

Three conditions are required to make an oath lawful and we find them clearly expressed by the Prophet Jeremiah (4:2): "Thou shalt swear: The Lord liveth in truth, and in judgment and in justice."

1. The truth of an oath requires that the assertion sworn to, be true, or, at least, is in good faith thought to be true. Generally speaking, a moral certainty is sufficient, or a reasonable probability, which for want for any proof to the contrary, amounts practically to moral certainty. A greater degree of certitude is required for an oath than for a simple assertion. In a court of law we should be still more certain of what we swear to, for fear of being the cause of serious damage to an innocent party. When some

information has been overheard, or been received from some trustworthy person, we may swear to its probability without stating it as a positive fact. The absence of this condition in an oath certainly constitutes a mortal sin, unless ignorance or want of deliberation should excuse. The reason is, that it implies a grievous irreverence to God for calling Him to witness a falsehood, as if either He did not know the truth, or would and could deceive by confirming a falsehood. Such an oath is *perjury*, an abominable sin in the sight of God, and still looked upon by the laws of nations as one of the most criminal acts, punishable with the penitentiary.

2. Judgment in an oath requires that we swear with discretion, prudence and reverence, and not without some necessity or a serious or reasonable motive. The absence of this condition would not constitute a mortal sin, because it does not appear to be a grievous irreverence to Almighty God to call upon Him as a witness in matters of little or no importance, provided, however, that the other two conditions be present. It is, however, wrong because it is really taking the name of God in vain.

3. Justice is to be differently understood, if it is a promise or a mere assertion that is confirmed by an oath. In a promissory oath, justice means that he who swears must never aim to obligate himself to anything unlawful. If the object of his oath should be something grievously sinful, it would be a mortal sin to swear to the fulfilment of it, because it implies a grievous irreverence to God, to bind one's self under oath to commit a mortal sin, implicitly supposing that God approves a wicked act. Such would be the case, if one were to swear to kill some one, or blindly to follow and obey the commands of the leaders of a secret society. Neither promise nor oath of that kind has any binding force. If the object of a promissary oath should be only venially sinful, it is not clear whether such an oath would imply a grievous irreverence to God or not.

In an assertory oath a want of justice comes not from the fact that its object is unlawful, but from the fact that the assertion itself is unlawful. Generally speaking this would not constitute a mortal sin, unless the oath in such a case would be an efficacious means of committing a mortal sin, as, for instance, a sin of detraction corroborated by an oath. Detraction is a sin; when combined with an oath, it

would work greater havoc with the good name of the neighbor. Using God's name to cause serious injury to our neighbor is certainly a grievous irreverence to Almighty God.

350. *Q. What is a vow?*

A. A vow is a deliberate promise made to God to do something that is pleasing to Him.

A mere purpose of the will is not sufficient to constitute a vow; for this three things are necessarily required: first, a certain deliberation; secondly, a purpose of the will; thirdly, the promise made to God. There is a resemblance between a vow and a promise made to man; the difference consists in this, that our promise to man must be expressed by some exterior sign, whereas the will is sufficient to make a vow to Almighty God, who scrutinizes the heart. It would be a mistake to imagine that we are vowing something to God, when we purpose to perform a good deed, and even promise to do so. We are not supposed to have made a vow, unless we intended to obligate ourselves in a new manner to God, so that we could not break that obligation without committing a special sin. A vow is an act of worship; the thing promised should refer to the service of God. The matter of the vow or the thing we promise must be morally possible; we cannot obligate ourselves to what is morally impossible. The matter of a vow must not only be good, but better than its opposite, or its omission. The reason of it is, that no work can be pleasing to God, unless it be a virtuous work; therefore, we cannot pledge ourselves to do something unlawful or merely indifferent. If the object of a vow were not better than its opposite, the vow would practically mean the omission of a greater good for a minor one. This certainly could not be pleasing to God, who desires that we always do the best we can. To know whether the object of a vow is better than its opposite, circumstances of persons, times and places must be taken into consideration. So, a mother would not make vow by promising a pilgrimage, which she could not make without neglecting her children. A vow to marry would generally not be valid, because the state of celibacy is in itself a more perfect state, unless perhaps considering one's particular frailty, it may be the means to avoid sin. It matters not, whether the object of the vow be already com-

manded or not. The religious and the clergy pledge themselves by vow to remain chaste in body and soul, although chastity is a commandment of the Lord applying to all according to their state of life.

A vow may be either absolute or conditional; as it may either depend upon the fulfilment of a promise or not. It may be simple or solemn. The only solemn vows are those taken by candidates to the priesthood or in a religious order. A vow may again be either real or personal; the former would be for instance, the giving of alms; the latter consists in some certain act of man, or the cessation from it, such as a pilgrimage or the giving up of gambling or drinking. To make a valid vow, a greater deliberation is required than for the commission of a mortal sin; children, though able to commit a mortal sin, may yet be unfit to make a vow. For the former a confused idea of the malice of the act may be sufficient; but to assume a new obligation, we must not only know it, but must know also the circumstances to be considered in a prudent deliberation before assuming it. Vows made in time of danger, are considered valid, unless the excitement was so intense as to deprive one of the use of his reason. Error or ignorance concerning the substance of the vow generally invalidates it. A vow of a pilgrimage or any other obligation undertaken for the recovery of a friend, would cease to be binding, if it were learned that he was dead and buried, because the final cause would no longer exist.

351. *Q. Is it a sin not to fulfil our vows?*
A. Not to fulfil our vows is a sin, mortal or venial, according to the nature of the vow and the intention we had in making it.

The measure of the obligation of a vow is the reasonable will of the one who makes it. A vow is, as it were, a law which we voluntarily take upon ourselves; the natural law commands us to keep a promise freely made to God. As man is free not to take upon himself such an obligation, so nothing prevents him from taking upon himself an obligation binding under venial sin, even when the object would be a serious matter. The will also should act reasonably, and not obligate itself under pain of mortal sin in trivial matters. The gravity of the obligation must chiefly be deduced from the intention had in making the vow. When

in making a vow, we did not consider the obligation it imposed, the obligation must then be determined by the nature of the object. It is in such cases presumed that our intention was to bind ourselves in proportion to the matter of the vow. Hearing Mass, going to Communion, saying the rosary may already be commanded by the Church under pain of mortal sin; to vow such acts may impose a grave obligation to be kept under pain of mortal sin. A vow is a personal act, and therefore no substitute is required in case one would find it impossible to comply with it. The heirs, however, are obliged to pay the real vows of the deceased, not so much in consequence of the obligation of the vow, but because upon receiving the heritage they succeed to the charges or debts, as well as to the rights of deceased; this obligation is one of the virtue of justice, rather than of the virtue of religion. Conditional vows do not obligate as long as the conditions are not fulfilled. If a vow is made to do something on a certain day, the obligation ceases, if not complied with on that day. If no time is specified, the promise should be complied with as soon as it can conveniently be done. The obligation of a vow may cease for various reasons. First, by a change of the object. It may cease to be good, as if one promises to enter a religious order and before entering his parents should be reduced to want and be in need of his services; in that case he is obliged to remain with and care for his parents. The object of the vow may become impossible; we may vow to build a church, but before we can build, our financial reverses render it impossible. Secondly, the obligation of a vow may cease through its annulment or suspension by one duly authorized; thus a father can annul or suspend a vow of his minor son, or the husband of his wife, but only in matters in which they are the masters; because their consent is supposed to have been in the intention of the one making the vow.

Thirdly, the obligation of a vow may cease through a dispensation, granted by the proper authorities in the name of God. By virtue of the power to loose, which Christ gave to His Church, it is evident that the Church has the authority to dispense from vows. The Supreme Head of the Church has the authority to dispense in all vows. Other superiors cannot, without special delegation, dispense in the following vows, viz.: The vows of perpetual chastity,

of entering an approved religious order, of a pilgrimage to Rome, to St. James at Compostella in Spain, or to the Holy Land. The vows taken in a religious order can be dispensed from by the regular superiors or the Pope, or in certain institutes by the Bishop. A vow may also be commuted by the proper authority into another good work under the same obligation.

352. *Q. What is forbidden by the second Commandment?*

A. The second Commandment forbids all false, rash, unjust, and unnecessary oaths, blasphemy, cursing, and profane words.

We have seen (Qu. 349) that to make an oath lawful three conditions are required, and that the absence of any of the three conditions makes an oath sinful and forbidden by the second commandment.

Blasphemy is a Greek word signifying properly to speak evil of any one; by common acceptance it now means a word of malediction, blame or insult against God. Blasphemy is chiefly a vice of the tongue, it may however be committed in writing also as 2 Paral. 32:17: "He wrote also letters full of blasphemy against the Lord." It would also be blasphemy to speak disrespectfully of the saints and holy things, on account of their relation to God. Blasphemy is one of the most heinous of sins. Reason tells us that to speak evil of parents or insult them is a crime, how much more grievous must the crime be when it is directed against God, our Creator, our Sovereign Lord, our greatest Benefactor, our Redeemer and our Preserver? In the opinion of great saints a blasphemer is worse than the damned in hell; for he blasphemes on earth and insults God whilst he is being favored by Him. As one's nationality is discovered by the language he speaks, so does the blasphemer on earth, by speaking the language of demons, show himself to be a citizen of the dark regions. The malice of blasphemy, however abominable in itself, is still increased by including sins against other virtues besides religion. To say, for instance, God is unjust, God is cruel, is not only blasphemy, but also heresy. Blasphemy is, of its kind, a mortal sin. The grievousness of the sins of blasphemy is clearly shown in Holy Scripture. Stoning to death was, in the Old Law, the penalty for blas-

phemy. "He that blasphemeth the name of the Lord, dying let him die; all the multitude shall stone him, whether he be a native or a stranger" (Levit. 24:16). The terrible punishments, which were inflicted upon a blasphemer in the Old Testament, prove how abominable this sin must be before God. Sennacherib, king of the Assyrians, had dearly to pay for the blasphemous utterances of his commander-in-chief, Rabsaces, against the Lord. An angel of heaven killed in one night 185,000 men of the Assyrian army, and the king himself was, after his return to Ninive, murdered by his own sons (4 Kings 19). The same fate befell Holofernes, the commander of Nabuchodonosor's army; by order of the king he was to conquer all nations and destroy all religions, so as to have Nabuchodonosor recognized as the only god. A Jewish woman named Judith, cut off his head, and his army was annihilated (Judith 3). The sin of blasphemy on the lips of a Christian is a far more heinous sin than could be committed by a heathen or a Jew, on account of greater intrinsic malice on his part. The laws of various countries may have eliminated it from the list of punishable crimes, but that does not change its character.

Cursing or imprecating evil is either to wish to one's self or to others some evil with the request that God or the devil may grant or execute that wish. A malediction is worse than a mere wish of evil. Such imprecations as the wishing of the breaking of the neck, of death or of eternal damnation, as we often hear on our streets, when made deliberately are certainly mortal sins. They are serious offenses against the second commandment, and, besides, against Christian charity. There are other expressions that do not exactly constitute a forbidden oath, are not directly blasphemous or imprecatory of evil, yet are unbecoming a Christian, and scandalize the hearers; these are called profane words.

A Catholic must not only avoid the above sins, but must see to it that they be not committed by persons or in places under his authority, lest they be visited upon him.

353. *Q. What is the third Commandment?*

A. The third Commandment is: Remember thou keep holy the Sabbath day.

This commandment, the last of the first table given to

Moses, the last of the three, which refer directly to God, is in Holy Scripture expressed thus: "Remember that thou keep holy the Sabbath day. Six days shall thou labor and shalt do all thy works. But on the seventh day is the Sabbath day of the Lord thy God, thou shalt do no work on it, thou nor thy son, nor thy daughter, nor thy man-servant, nor thy maid-servant, nor thy beast, nor the stranger, that is within thy gates. For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, and the sea, and all things that are in them, and rested on the seventh day; therefore the Lord blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it" (Exod. 20:8-11).

It is to be remarked that the Lord gave this commandment a different form; He prefaces it by the word *Remember*, plainly showing that He laid special stress upon the keeping of this commandment. We belong to God, body and soul; therefore we owe Him external as well as internal homage. The keeping of the first three commandments dedicate man wholly to God by three kinds of homage: the homage of the heart, the homage of the tongue, and the homage of the body. St. Thomas explains how the commandment of keeping holy the Lord's day naturally follows upon the two preceding. After removing the obstacles to true religion in the first two commandments, God lays its foundation in the third. It is not enough that man should abstain from idolatry and perjury; to this negative worship must be joined a positive one, of which God alone can prescribe the acts, the times and the conditions. The positive worship He commands must be public and solemn. That nothing in an affair of so much importance should be left to the caprice of men, God has been careful to regulate all the details of the public worship, which He requires of us, and to fix the day on which society should render Him this public and necessary worship.

354. *Q. What are we commanded by the third Commandment?*

A. By the third Commandment we are commanded to keep holy the Lord's day and the holydays of obligation, on which we are to give our time to the service and worship of God.

The Catechism places on a par with the Sundays also the holidays of obligation. When explaining the commandments

of the Church, we shall prove that the Church has the right to institute holidays of obligation, to be kept holy exactly like the Sunday. The third commandment, like all others, contains some positive orders, whilst it is negative in forbidding anything that may prevent the performance of the thing commanded. God commands that the day be kept holy, without specifying what positive acts shall be done to keep it holy. He orders that the day shall be devoted to works of religion, that our time shall be given to the service and worship of God. This supposes an internal and external worship on Sundays, as will be explained in the following question. The profanation of the Sunday, besides being a very great sin, is also a misfortune to operatives and to society. It is a sin, a crime of high-treason against God, forbidden so often by the Supreme Legislator under most severe penalties; the bold violation of this fundamental law is a continual source of punishments to individuals and to nations. The profanation of the Sunday tends wholly to spread disorder, is disadvantageous to the working classes, who either exhaust themselves before their time by too assiduous labor, or waste themselves into those excesses which are common among the irreligious. The rich, whose cupidity causes them and others to profane the Sunday, have all to fear from a multitude of laborers devoid of faith and morality. The profanation of the Sunday is also fatal to society, because it disturbs and disgraces it. Without the rest of the Sunday, suspending material labor, giving man leisure and imposing on him the obligation to occupy himself with moral labor, moral amelioration becomes almost impossible. The reason of it is, that the evils of society take their root in men's souls, and Christianity alone can supply a remedy to the evils of the soul. The profanation of the Sunday is a disgrace to society, and should cover it with shame. We would not have, however, our readers believe that the ideal observance of the Sunday is the puritanical way of keeping it. It would certainly be desirable, if the whole day could be devoted to the worship of God, so that every deed performed, that every word spoken on it would tend directly to the service of God. But taking into consideration the frailty of the multitude, this is the privilege of the few. Yet, idleness on Sunday is a vice just as on any other day. It seems to have been the intention of the

Supreme Legislator that, since weak humanity could not snatch itself so completely away from the world, our works of piety should be interspersed with some honest recreation, making of it a day of rest as well as of prayer.

355. *Q. How are we to worship God on Sundays and holydays of obligation?*

A. We are to worship God on Sundays and holydays of obligation by hearing Mass, by prayer, and by other good works.

God commanded that the Sundays should be kept holy, without determining what should be done. He instituted His Church to be the interpreter of His will. The Church will tell us the minimum that is required to comply with the law of God. Christ in the New Law commands penance under pain of eternal damnation. The Church declares that we shall fulfil that law by abstaining from flesh-meat on Fridays, keeping the fast of Lent and of certain other days during the year. Christ commands us to confess our sins, the Church declares that we shall do so at least once a year. Christ commands us to receive Him in Holy Communion, the Church directs that we shall do so at least once a year, during the Easter time, if we would continue members of the Church. God commands that we keep holy the Sunday; the Church obliges us at least to hear Mass, as a minimum of our duties on that day. The reason why this is commanded in preference to other religious exercises, is because Holy Mass is the only sacrifice of the New Law, and as such is of its nature the most sublime and most worthy act of worship. It is the center and support of all the other acts of religion. The idea of sacrifice, as the great act of religion, is found even among the least civilized and savage nations. In the United States the faithful are likewise obliged to hear Mass on six other days, besides the Sundays, viz.: New Year's day, Ascension day, the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin, All Saints' day, the Immaculate Conception and Christmas. There are various reasons allowing many of the faithful to work on days that are not kept by non-Catholics. But even when there is a lawful excuse for working on those days, the faithful should not forget that the precept to hear Mass on Sundays and holidays of obligation, is entirely distinct from the prohibition to work; and if they can hear Mass, even if they

must go to work afterward, the obligation of hearing Mass remains, and they would be guilty of mortal sin by neglecting it. This question will be further considered when we treat of the commandments of the Church (Qu. 390).

By hearing Mass on Sundays and holidays of obligation, without any other additional religious exercises, we fulfil the minimum of what is commanded, and avoid desecrating those days by committing mortal sin, but we are not doing our whole duty. How could we do it, if we devote merely half an hour to the service of God, when we are commanded to keep the whole day holy? Were it not for this day of prayer, our mind, continually occupied with temporal affairs, would soon forget our last end. Our love, instead of being purified, would become more and more degraded and we would soon reach the level of pagans. No Catholic should therefore be satisfied for the observance of the Sunday with what is strictly required of him. He should take his time in performing with more perfection his daily Christian obligations. The day should be well begun by a less hurried and better morning prayer than usual; on one Sunday every month Holy Communion should not be omitted; in the afternoon the children should be sent to catechetical instructions; sodality meetings should be regularly attended, and as eagerness to hear the word of God is one of the sure tokens of eternal salvation, the Lecture in the evening and the Vesper and Benediction service should not be omitted. The day can be filled with many other good works that are left to the choice of each one in particular, especially in reading good books and Catholic periodicals.

356. *Q. Are the Sabbath day and the Sunday the same?*

A. The Sabbath day and the Sunday are not the same. The Sabbath is the seventh day of the week, and is the day which was kept holy in the Old Law; the Sunday is the first day of the week, and is the day which is kept holy in the New Law.

The necessity for reserving a certain time for the external worship of God comes from the law of nature. As nature has appointed certain times for the functions necessary to the life of the body, such as eating, drinking, sleeping, so

Religion or the relation of the creature to the Creator naturally requires that there should be certain fixed times in which the soul may recover its strength, by meditating on the eternal truths and contemplating the divine perfections. In the beginning God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it, without however giving to Adam the special command of keeping holy that or any other day. It is very plain that the day to be kept holy under the Mosaic law was the seventh day of the week, or the Sabbath. Holy Scripture is very explicit on this subject (Ex. 20:10). The Jewish people have always kept and still keep the Sabbath. This special command was to be repealed when the other Judaic ceremonies should be abrogated, namely, at the death of Christ. These ceremonies were only a shadow of the truth; they should therefore end with the coming of the truth. We find traces in Holy Scripture of the custom prevailing from the very dawn of Christianity, of consecrating the first day of the week to the service of God, as the following quotations will show: "On the first day of the week, when we were assembled to break bread" etc. (Acts 20:7). St. Paul orders that on the first day of the week collections should be made (1 Cor. 16:2). "I was in the spirit on the Lord's day," says St. John (Apoc. 1:10). The first positive ecclesiastical law we have on the subject is from the first Council of Nice, when the Christians were ordered to pray on Sundays, not kneeling, but standing. Towards the end of the fourth century the Council of Laodicea ordered that "the Christians should not appear to do like the Jews, and not be idle but should work on the Sabbath day, and should specially keep the Lord's day, and, if possible, not work on that day." Since that time the ecclesiastical law on this subject has been very explicit. It is well to bear in mind that the Christians are not bound by the third commandment of the Decalogue as it stands; that the observance of the Lord's day is of ecclesiastical institution, that the obligation to hear Mass existed almost from the beginning of Christianity, but was imposed by the Church, and that the law to abstain from servile work exists from time immemorial. When we say that the observance of the Sabbath was transferred to the Sunday, we mean that, as the Jews worshiped God in a special manner on Saturday, the Christians should by order of the

Church devote the Sunday to the worship of God; we do not mean that Christians are obliged to do so on account of the third commandment of the Decalogue.

It will be very hard for one who believes in the Bible only and does not admit Christian Tradition, or anything not recorded in the Bible, to argue with a Seventh-day Adventist and show him to be wrong. The law, as given to the Jews, most evidently prescribed Saturday as the day to be kept holy; it is equally clear that it was the Church that substituted the Sunday for the Sabbath. If the Church is wrong on the subject, the Protestants who follow her in this are guilty of breaking at least one law of the Bible; if the Church is right, they accept at least one point of Christian Tradition; hence according to their principles of faith, they are wrong in either case. To the Catholic the question is very plain. To him the Church is the embodiment of Christianity; to her Christ entrusted His power; since then the Sabbath day as part of the Jewish ceremonial, along with all the other Jewish feast-days and ceremonies, ceased to be obligatory, for then the figure made way for the reality; the Catholic readily sees that the Church had the right to appoint and did appoint the Sunday as the day to be kept holy by Christians.

357. *Q. Why does the Church command us to keep the Sunday holy instead of the Sabbath?*

A. The Church commands us to keep the Sunday holy instead of the Sabbath, because on Sunday Christ rose from the dead, and on Sunday He sent the Holy Ghost upon the Apostles.

At what precise time the Church substituted the observance of the Sunday for that of the Sabbath day is not certain. It was undoubtedly done by the Apostles themselves, and most probably immediately after the descent of the Holy Ghost. The change was certainly made before a word of the New Testament was written, as the texts we quoted in the preceding question clearly indicated. We shall now examine the reasons why the Church made the change. Long before the days of Christ, the heathens called the first day of the week *Sunday;* it was dedicated to one of their gods, the sun. The Christians have kept the name, but have attached a new meaning to it. Christ is to them the Sun of wisdom appearing to man. A better

appellation is the Lord's day, as St. John calls it in the Apocalypse. When it comes to investigating the reasons which prompted the Church to select the Sunday in preference to Saturday, or any other day, we may give the following: 1st, It seems reasonable that the Church did not select Saturday; the Jewish ceremonial, feast days and even the Sabbath were abolished by the death of Christ; the Christians were to profess a new form of religion; hence it was quite natural that they should do away with all that savored of Judaism. 2nd, On Sunday, that is, on the first day of the week, light began to shine on the world. 3rd, St. Justin the Martyr and the letter ascribed to Barnabas say that Sunday was selected, because on that day Christ rose from the dead, and caused mankind to pass from darkness to light. 4th, It was on this day that the Holy Ghost was sent upon the Apostles, and that the world began to be regenerated by Him.

358. *Q. What is forbidden by the third Commandment?*

A. The third Commandment forbids all unnecessary servile work and whatever else may hinder the due observance of the Lord's day.

We may distinguish three kinds of works prohibited on Sundays, viz.: servile, judicial and civil. We should not lose sight of the fact that, as the Church has the authority to prescribe what devotional exercises we should perform on Sundays, that she may also determine what particular works are prohibited, as hindering the due observance of the Lord's day. Servile works will be considered in the next question. We treat here only of works that are unnecessary, because necessity has no law. As regards judicial works, the positive law of the Church forbids the summoning of witnesses, the requiring of a judicial oath, proferring and executing a sentence as well in the civil as in the ecclesiastical courts. Transgressions of that kind are rare, because the laws of the nations are still in keeping with the laws of the Church on that point. Under the heading of civil works or merchandising, the positive law prohibited many forms of buying and selling and other commercial transactions. The greater part, however, of these laws have fallen into desuetude. Contrary customs have prevailed which the laws of the land tacitly approve or do

not punish; to-day it seems lawful to perfect all contracts of buying and selling, unless when they require public solemnity or legal authority. When any of the above works should hinder us from attending to our Christian duties, they are certainly sinful. To make it plainer as to what is allowed or forbidden on Sundays besides servile works, we will add a few remarks about the works, which exercise the mind more than the body, or the mind as much as the body, in other words, liberal and common or mixed works. To read, to write, to draw, to perform on musical instruments, to study, and all that belongs to the liberal arts, are not forbidden on Sundays, even though done to earn money. Architects, painters, sculptors and embroiderers, by sketching their designs, do not perform any servile work. The common works, which exercise the mind as much as the body, are equally permissible, provided one does not run the risk, without good reason, of missing Mass. Such are: to take a walk, to drive, to sail, to hunt, to play, to fish, etc., for recreation. We do not mean, however, to convey the idea, as if these distractions constituted the best way of keeping the Sunday. Games of foot or baseball are not forbidden, but they should be so arranged as not to interfere with our church duties.

359. *Q. What are servile works?*

A. Servile works are those which require labor rather of body than of mind.

Servile works must be determined by the nature of the work and the customs prevailing in various places. As the name indicates servile works are works generally performed by laborers or servants. The nature of the work considered then are those that require manual labor, such as, to plow, or to sew. Their nature will often at once show that they are servile works, and therefore not allowable by contrary custom, as long as the present ecclesiastical law stands. To differentiate the servile character of a work it is immaterial, whether it is done for gain or for pleasure. Plowing, carpenter work and the like are forbidden on Sundays, even if done as a mere pastime. It matters not whether such work is done for a good or a bad intention, it is forbidden, even if it were intended to give the money earned thereby to the poor. It matters not whether such work entails more or less fatigue; a long

walk may be very fatiguing, and yet it is not a servile work. Hence we may safely admit the following points:

1. It is not forbidden to travel on Sundays, and to do all that is required to that end, although it may include servile work, as handling trunks and boxes.

2. Artistic painting is not forbidden; to paint fences or houses, or to whitewash walls is forbidden.

3. Sketching or embroidering is not servile work, whilst sewing is.

4. Typesetting and printing are servile work, although the printing of a newspaper on Sunday may be lawful when necessity demands it.

5. Hunting and fishing are not servile works, unless they are combined with hard labor.

6. The hard work of cooking and general house or farm work is not forbidden, because it is necessary, or usage makes it such.

We add a few remarks from the Pastoral Letter of the Fathers of the third Plenary Council of Baltimore. "Far be it from us to advocate such Sunday laws as would hinder necessary work or prohibit such popular enjoyments as are consistent with the sacredness of the day. It is well known, however, that the tendency is to rush far beyond the bounds of necessity and propriety. But no community can afford to have either gain or amusement at such a cost. To turn the Lord's day into a day of toil, is a blighting curse to a a country; to turn it into a day of dissipation would be worse."

360. *Q. Are servile works on Sunday ever lawful?*
A. Servile works are lawful on Sunday when the honor of God, the good of our neighbor, or the necessity requires them.

Besides the cases here given, when the law prohibiting servile works is suspended, there is another source whence work on Sunday may be legalized, viz.: the dispensation of the Church. The Church made the law and can dispense from its observance. The causes which we will now consider make it lawful to perform servile works on Sundays, even without a dispensation.

1. The honor of God may require us to do certain hard work, which closely concerns the service of God, such as ringing bells or carrying statues in procession; or even hard

work which only remotely refers to the service of God, such as carrying stone or lumber to build a church, when the poverty of the place should demand it; the same may be said concerning the work done for or in a fair as a means to gather the necessary funds to carry on the church work in God's honor.

2. The good of our neighbor, or charity towards him, makes it lawful to do servile work on Sunday, when it is necessary to help the sick, and to do for the poor what they are allowed to do for themselves, when in great or extreme want. Charity would commend the man, who, to save a poor family from starvation should put in a crop for them on Sunday, if he had no other time to do it.

3. Necessity justifies servile work on Sundays, when it cannot be omitted without injury or detriment either spiritual or corporal. Hence:

1st, It is lawful to servants, laborers and all others to obey their masters or parents, commanding servile works on Sunday, even without a just cause, whenever they cannot refuse without serious inconvenience. A hired man would not be obliged to resign a position demanding Sunday work, if he is not able to find another position.

2nd, Laborers and servants can wash and repair their own or their children's garments, when their whole time during the week is given to other work.

3rd, Bakers and butchers may work at their trade, if the wants of others compel them; and when the necessary work cannot be done on Saturday.

4th, A work may be continued, when it entails serious loss, if interrupted, such as burning brick, factory work. Owners, however, are guilty when letting or directing their employees to work when not necessary.

6. Tailors and shoemakers may be excused, if by not working they would put others to great inconvenience.

7. Farmers are allowed to work in their fields, to prevent an impending loss from rain, storms, etc.

The saintly Curé of Ars used to say that he knew of two excellent ways to ruin one's self, viz.: to work on Sundays, and to take what belongs to another.

For the welfare of society and his own is the Catholic obliged to set the good example to others; he should therefore abstain from all unnecessary servile work on Sunday.

LESSON THIRTY-THIRD

FROM THE FOURTH TO THE SEVENTH COMMANDMENT

361. *Q. What is the fourth Commandment?*

A. The fourth Commandment is: Honor thy father and thy mother.

The fourth commandment in Scripture reads as follows: "Honor thy father and thy mother, that thou mayest be longlived upon the land which the Lord thy God will give thee" (Exod. 20:12). This is the first of the commandments of the second table of stone given to Moses, and concerns our duties to our neighbor. It prescribes our duties towards those that are the nearest and dearest to us, our parents. It is to be noticed that of all commandments this is the only one with a special sanction or a special reward attached to it. This promise of longevity contains a triple blessing: 1st, a temporal blessing or a long life; 2nd, special graces of salvation; 3rd, the blessing of parents reaching even unto a good death. It is of faith that fidelity to our duties towards our parents is a long life; to make the lengthening of life a reward it must be happy; otherwise God, who desires to reward filial piety, would not be faithful of His promises. When contrary occurrences fall under our observation, we ought to believe that God permits these exceptions for the good of His elect.

362. *Q. What are we commanded by the fourth Commandment?*

A. We are commanded by the fourth Commandment to honor, love, and obey our parents in all that is not sin.

The reason of our duties towards our parents must be sought in the fact that, next to God, they are our greatest benefactors, and that they govern us in God's name. First, we owe them our existence, our life, the foundation of all other blessings; to them we are indebted for our education of the body as well as of the soul. Secondly, we obtain the supernatural life of the soul through the medium of our

parents; they procure us the opportunity to receive it in Baptism; they lead our first steps in the path of righteousness and on the road to heaven. Thirdly, all other blessings we possess come to us, next to God, through our parents.

Parents are God's representatives towards us; they lead and direct us in His name. We are born entirely helpless in body as well as in soul; nature's law demands that we follow them; there would be no order in the world, if we were not submissive to them.

St. Paul promulgates the same doctrine, when he speaks of the secular authority: "There is no power, but from God, and those that are, are ordained of God. Therefore he that resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God" (Rom. 12:1, 2). Our parents are our first natural superiors, and we must look upon them as the vicegerents of God.

The honor which we owe to our parents, comprises three duties, Respect, Love and Obedience.

1. *Respect.* Our father and mother hold the place of God in our regard. This is the foundation of their dignity, as well as their title to the respect which we owe them. Our respect must be both interior and exterior. Interior respect consists in this that we recognize the dignity of our parents and treat them accordingly. They hold the place of God, therefore their dignity is in a way divine. The ambassador or representative of a country stands for it; respect due the country is respect due to him. Parents represent the greatest power, independently of their good or bad qualities. We owe them, therefore, the greatest respect. Exterior respect is but the outward expression by word or deed of our interior veneration and esteem. We owe then to our parents the outward marks of respect, which we would give to a messenger from heaven, if he were in a visible manner to appear to us. We must address them in a polite and reverential manner, and beware of saying anything against their honor; we must invariably give them the first place. We have an illustration of this in the treatment Joseph accorded to his aged father; of Solomon to his mother; and especially of Our Lord Himself in His conduct towards His Mother and foster-father.

2. *Love.* Nature made it a duty for all beings, even tigers and lions, to love those who gave them birth. The love of children must partake of a supernatural principle.

They should love their parents for God's sake, and because He commands it; we must love them in their soul and in their body, wish and do them all the spiritual and temporal good that they can reasonably expect of us, whatever may be their failings or their virtues.

3. Obedience means cheerful submission to the commands and admonitions of superiors. The fourth commandment requires of us that we obey our parents in all that is not sin; and here again faith teaches us that our parents are endowed with divine authority. We find striking illustrations of filial obedience in young Tobias, who said to his father: "I will do all things which thou hast commanded me" (Tob. 5:17), and in our Lord Jesus Christ, who deigned to be obedient for thirty years to His parents, so that His whole life at Nazareth is summed up in the following words: "He was subject to them" (Luke 2:51).

Obedience to parents however is restricted to all that is good or indifferent; we would not be allowed to obey, if they were to command us anything sinful, for the simple reason, that, since they hold their authority from God, they could not have received any authority to oblige us to offend Him.

We may add another duty, which refers to filial love and piety, viz.: assistance. Piety and love must manifest themselves in works. Children are therefore obliged to assist their parents in their spiritual and temporal wants. They should consider themselves happy to have it in their power to return their parents a portion of what they have received from them. How much more anxious should they still be to procure spiritual succor for them, especially when they are sick. Children should behave in such a manner, that their parents may say of them what Tobias and his wife said of their son: "He is the light of our eyes, the staff of our old age, and the only consolation of our life" (Tob. 5).

363. *Q. Are we bound to honor and obey others than our parents?*

A. We are bound also to honor and obey our Bishops, pastors, magistrates, teachers, and other lawful superiors.

In the eyes of Religion, society is only one great family; superiors are like parents; inferiors like children. Hence, the duties of society are only an extension of the duties

of the family. This is the reason why we are bound to honor, that is, to respect, love and obey the ecclesiastical as well as the civil superiors, in proportion to the authority they have received from above. In the first place, we should honor our Holy Father the Pope, whoever he may be, because he is the direct vicegerent of Christ upon earth. His is the highest dignity and the greatest power on earth. Disobedience to the Pope, the head of the Church, would make us like the heathens and publicans. Next in order come Bishops and priests, the ambassadors of God and the dispensers of His mysteries. They are commissioned to perpetuate Religion on the earth and to procure for mankind the happiness of eternity. After them come the superiors in the temporal order, because they concur indirectly in the salvation of our souls. We will examine in particular the duties of employees towards their employers, and of all men towards the civil authorities.

1. By employees we understand those who contract with another, their employer, for their time and work in consideration of a certain amount of money, or other emoluments; we include, therefore, domestic servants and laborers. The contract creates the relation of employer and employee, of servant and master, and although it is chiefly a relation of justice, yet it falls to some extent under the fourth Commandment, as is plain from the word of St. Paul: "Servants, obey in all things your masters according to the flesh, not serving to the eye, as pleasing men, but in simplicity of heart, fearing God" (Col. 2:2). Employees owe their employers respect for the time they are in their employ; they should faithfully comply with the terms of their contract. Civil law and social custom regulate this mutual relationship.

2. Far more important are our duties to the civil authorities. Civil authority comes from God, although the person invested with it may be elected by the people. This is clear from many passages of Holy Scripture. (See Eccli. 17:14.— Rom. 13. 1-7). In many countries the civil authorities are chosen by the people, and each one is in conscience obliged to see to it, inasmuch as lays in him, that the proper parties be elected. It will not be out of place here briefly to state the obligations of the people, considered as electors.

1. It is generally a duty binding in conscience to take part

in public meetings and elections, to promote the good of the community, and prevent the evil that might arise from unworthy officials. The welfare of Church and State depends nowadays upon the result of the general elections. No true Christian should fail to cast his vote; he ought to consider it a matter of duty and honor to do so.

2. It may even be a grievous sin to vote for an unworthy candidate, who is known as a bitter enemy of religion, or as unscrupulous and devoid of conscience. We should not vote for one who favors polygamy, who has false ideas about the marriage tie, who would abolish Catholic schools, or who is a socialist or an anarchist.

3. Intimate acquaintance or superior ability is no reason why we ought to support such a candidate. If all the candidates are equally objectionable, we should abstain from voting, for we should not by our vote coöperate in the injury or the destruction of religion, or of the State.

4. The only reason why we may vote for an unworthy candidate, would be to prevent the election of one still more unworthy.

6. Catholics may belong to and vote with any political party and its candidates, so long as such parties and individuals are not opposed to the welfare of religion or of the State.

7. Catholics in matters affecting the freedom and welfare of religion, should be guided by their Bishops, or follow the lead of good Catholic newspapers. Bishops and priests, however, do not meddle in politics, except when the sacred interests of Religion are at stake. As private citizens, they have the same rights and privileges as all others. To show how injurious it may prove to abstain, we have only to refer to cases where great injury has been done to religion by some Catholics abstaining from voting; for instance, in 1879 in little Belgium a destructive and impious law was passed by one majority, the vote of a senator who had been elected by one vote majority!

As citizens we must be subject to the laws and officers of the law of the country we live in; showing due respect, not only to the good and gentle, but also to the froward, as St Peter says (1 Pet. 2:18). To teachers due honor should be shown by their pupils, because they are for the time being the depositories of parental confidence and authority.

364. *Q. Have parents and superiors any duties towards those who are under their charge?*

A. It is the duty of parents and superiors to take good care of all under their charge and give them proper direction and example.

1. Parents are bound to love their children and to educate them in things concerning both body and soul. This all-important obligation is derived from the law of nature. In case of the death of the parents, this duty devolves upon the grandparents, or on those who lawfully succeed them in their rights and duties. We shall first consider the duties of parents towards their infant children and the sins of neglect they commit.

1. Before the birth of their child parents must abstain from all that might bring on premature birth or cause its death.

2. Those parents commit a mortal sin, who abandon their children.

3. Mothers should not forget that they have special duties towards their infants; if a nurse is necessary, the mother cannot be too particular in her selection. In regard to the temporal welfare of the children, parents have the following obligations.

1. They must provide for the temporal wants of their children, till they are able to provide for themselves.

2. They are guilty of injustice towards them, if they do not give them an education, that will enable them to earn their own living.

3. They sin by squandering their own property and placing themselves in the impossibility of providing properly for their children. Concerning the spiritual education of their children, parents must not forget the following:

1. They are obliged to give them the proper training, to see that they learn and practise their religion, avoid evil company, keep the laws of God and of the Church, frequent the Sacraments and avoid sin.

2. They must keep them away from occasions of sin. Parents would commit a mortal sin by taking or allowing them to go to immoral shows, or not preventing them from reading bad or dangerous books.

3. They are bound to give them a good example. Those parents who give their children a bad example and thereby

teach them bad habits, are guilty of very grievous sins. They are, moreover, bound to watch over the conduct and correct the faults of their children, avoiding excessive leniency and excessive severity, and always striving to keep their children pure and innocent and to inspire them with hatred of sin.

Parents are the natural educators of their children; and if they are not themselves able to give them a proper education, it is their sacred duty to send them to such schools and educational institutions, where they may together with profane sciences be taught their holy religion and be made to practise it. But in places where there are no Catholic schools or colleges, they should comply with the directions of the Fathers of the Third Plenary Council of Baltimore, who after impressing upon parents the obligation of sending their children to Catholic schools, declare that, when this cannot be done, they may send them to public or neutral schools, provided their children run no risk of losing their faith or their innocence. In all other cases, where there are good Catholic schools, etc., they should not send them to other schools, unless for reasons approved in each case by the Bishop of the diocese. In such cases, approved by the Bishop, in which children are sent to the public schools and non-Catholic institutions, the parents are obliged to leave nothing undone on their part to offset the danger of their losing the faith or becoming indifferent to it, for children are exposed, in such schools, to become careless and indifferent in the knowledge and practice of their religion and to suffer shipwreck both in faith and morals. Parents, as individuals, are bound, first of all and above all, to save their own souls, but as parents, their first and most important and indispensable duty is to do all in their power to save the souls of their children, and their neglect to do this will cause their own damnation, unless God gives them the grace to repent before death.

Superiors and teachers have serious obligations towards those who are under their charge. They owe it to their subordinates, that they do their whole duty, as demanded by their particular offices. They would be unworthy of the confidence and authority entrusted to them, if they are simply guided by temporal self-interest without any regard to the temporal and spiritual welfare of those who are under their charge. These have a right to demand from

them the good example in civil and moral virtues. They should heed the words of St. Paul, "If any man hath not care of his own, and chiefly of those of his house, he hath denied the faith and is worse than an infidel" (1 Tim. 5: 8).

365. *Q. What is forbidden by the fourth Commandment?*

A. The fourth Commandment forbids all disobedience, contempt, and stubbornness towards our parents or lawful superiors.

All offenses against the love, respect and obedience due to parents and lawful superiors are forbidden by the fourth Commandment.

Children sin grievously against their duty of love:

1. By disliking and hating their parents and treating them harshly. The love they owe their parents is of stricter obligation than that they owe to strangers.

2. By being habitually cross to them, and looking at them and speaking to them in such a manner, as if they bore them hatred.

3. By not helping them in their great spiritual or corporal wants; children must wait upon their parents when seriously sick, or see to it that they are properly attended to, and warn them, when they are in danger of death, and take all possible care that they be not deprived of the helps and consolations of the Church during their last illness, nor of the prayers and suffrages of the Church after their death.

4. By not respecting their last will and testament, nor fulfilling the obligations it imposes on them.

5. By interiorly hating them, or wishing them some evil, or even death.

Children sin grievously against their duty of respect:

1. By striking them, though slightly, or deliberately raising their hands against them. This does not exclude due severity, when the parents are bereft of their senses in cases of drunkenness, delirium or insanity.

2. By giving their parents just cause for grief and sadness.

3. By deliberately exciting them to anger by their misconduct, and even to break out into swearing and cursing.

4. By cursing them and shamefully ridiculing them in their presence.

5. By ignoring or despising them, or being ashamed of them, because of their poverty or defective education.

Love and respect always remain; obedience ceases when parental authority comes to an end, when the children are of age or emancipated, unless they continue to live under the parental roof. Children must obey them in all things pertaining to their parental authority, and in these only; but they are not bound to obey them in things forbidden, as is clear, nor in their choice of a state of life. Parents have no right to prevent their children from entering a religious order, unless they be in a great want, and then only as long as this want is not relieved. To sin grievously against the obedience due to parents, it is necessary that the command be explicit, serious and in a matter of great importance. The acts of disobedience on the part of children are generally only venial sins, unless they are combined with contempt and stubbornness. In a minor degree, children owe love, respect and obedience to all lawful civil superiors. The great authority in matters spiritual is the Church and her ministers. To determine whether a command of the Church is binding under mortal sin, or not, the object of the command and the manner in which it is given must be considered.

366. *Q. What is the fifth Commandment?*

A. The fifth Commandment is: Thou shalt not kill.

After establishing by the fourth Commandment the happiness of the family and of society, God forbids by the other six every thing, that may disturb this happiness. As the first of all natural goods is life, the Divine Legislator begins by safeguarding it. The fifth commandment is a sacred rampart with which God is pleased to surround our days, those of the child yet unborn, those of the poor and the helpless, those of all men without exception. Whosoever dares to pass over this rampart is doomed to eternal punishment. God said to men, after the deluge: "I will require the blood of your lives . . . at the hand of every man" (Gen. 9:5).

367. *Q. What are we commanded by the fifth Commandment?*

A. We are commanded by the fifth Commandment to

live in peace and union with our neighbor, to respect his rights, to seek his spiritual and bodily welfare, and to take proper care of our own life and health.

The fifth commandment, while forbidding wilful murder and all other sins which naturally lead to it, prescribes all the positive acts of virtue required to avoid its transgression. Christ in the New Law perfected the commandment as given to the Jewish people. "You have heard," said Christ, "that it was said to them of old: Thou shalt not kill. And whosoever shall kill, shall be in danger of the judgment. But I say to you, that whosoever is angry with his brother, shall be in danger of the judgment" (Mat. 5: 21, 22). The positive prescriptions implied in the fifth commandment are: 1st, That we live in peace and union with our neighbor, in as far, at least, as this may depend on us. The Christian law of charity demands of us, not only not to offend our neighbor directly, but also to avoid all that might justly offend him. When our neighbor feels offended or displeased, it is unnecessary to enquire who is to blame, or to wait for an explanation from him, but we ought to take the first step towards reconciliation, even if he were in fault; this is the teaching of Christ, who commands us to leave our offering before the altar, if we find that our neighbor has anything against us, and be first reconciled with him.

2. We must respect the rights of our neighbor. Rights create relative obligations. My rights would be of no practical value to me, unless others were bound to respect them. My neighbor has rights; I have the corresponding obligation to respect them. There would never be occasion for trouble, if every one's rights were respected, and every one did his duty.

3. We must seek his spiritual and temporal welfare. We are not obliged to do anything extraordinary in the matter, but to avoid all cause of friction; we must positively love our neighbor and be disposed to do for him what we would wish to be done for ourselves.

The fifth commandment further obliges us to take proper care of our own life and health, by using the ordinary means adapted to our state of life, because if we did not, we would endanger or shorten our life. It would be a sin to refuse using ordinary means to regain our health. No one is

obliged, however, to resort to most arduous or extraordinary means to save his life, a limb, or his health, for instance, to expatriate himself or to undergo a very painful and dangerous operation, even if there were no other means of saving life. A woman would not be obliged to submit to certain delicate operations, if she had a greater horror of them than of death, unless the common good, or the welfare of her children demanded it, especially if there were a moral certainty of good results.

368. *Q. What is forbidden by the fifth Commandment?*

A. The fifth Commandment forbids all wilful murder, fighting, anger, hatred, revenge, and bad example.

The chief sin forbidden by the fifth commandment is homicide. Homicide means the killing of a human being. This commandment does not forbid us to kill animals, because they were made for man, who can, when advantageous to him, take away their life. But man, having been created for God alone, no man is master of his own life, or of the life of another man. Homicide is committed in three different ways; suicide, duelling, murder. To be a crime, homicide must be wilful and unjust. A man would not be guilty of homicide, if he accidentally, without intending it, killed another man, because without the deliberate consent of the will there can be no sin. Sheriffs are not guilty of homicide in executing a sentence of death; their act, though wilful, is not unjust, but lawful.

1. Suicide is the wilful and unjust killing of one's self. Suicide is a crime, because no one is the master of his own life. The fifth commandment does not say: "*Thou shalt not kill others*, but absolutely: "*Thou shalt not kill.*" Suicide, which cannot be permitted on any account, is a most fatal crime against one's self; he who takes away his temporal life, brings on himself eternal death. Suicide is also a crime, an injustice against society, and is mean, cowardly and scandalous. The Church forbids Christian burial to be given to suicides. What is more just than to deprive of the honors of religion him who dies in the act of wilfully mocking its laws? The number of suicides increases in the same proportion as practical religion decreases; life becomes intolerable to those who believe not and confide not in God's providence.

2. A duel is a combat between two or more persons who meet in mortal combat, after having previously arranged the place, the hour, the weapons and the mode of combat. It is a great crime, violating, at the same time, both human and divine laws, by substituting private authority for the authority of society and of God Himself. Duellists are infamous and moral cowards and are excommunicated by the Church, and if they die in the combat, are refused a Christian burial. The Church has also declared excommunicated the seconds and all who actively participate in a duel.

3. Murder is an action by which one man inflicts death on another wilfully and unjustly. There are various kinds of murder, of which we will treat separately:

1. *The killing of a criminal.* Outside of a case of self-defense, nobody is allowed to kill even a notorious criminal, without the intervention of public authority. Hence popular vengeance, commonly called Lynch-law is entirely to be condemned. A husband is not allowed to kill his wife caught in adultery, nor her paramour; nor a parent the seducer of his daughter. He would be justified in killing him to *save* her innocence, if he could save it in no other way. But after the commission of the crime, the law must be allowed to take its course.

That the civil law, through its criminal courts is empowered to sentence criminals to capital punishment, and to execute the sentence, is beyond all doubt.

2. *The killing of an unjust aggressor.* It is certainly lawful to defend ourselves against one unjustly striving to take our life, or to rob us of our chastity, even if his death were to be the result, with the understanding, however, that we do not injure him more than is required for our self-protection, and have not the direct intention of killing him. The following are the conditions for a justifiable case of this kind: 1st, that the evil we fear at the hands of the unjust aggressor be not already accomplished, because, in that case, it would not be self-defence but revenge; however to prevent a recurrence of such aggression, molestation or insult, a girl or a woman may be justified in giving a sound horsewhipping. 2nd, That the intention of the aggressor be certainly evil. We would not be justified in killing any one at night, merely because he was seen prowling around our premises; there must be

sure signs of his evil intention. 3rd, That the aggression be actually begun, or attempted, and not a mere expectation of trouble.

In self-defence we are allowed to protect, even by the death of the aggressor, not only our life, but also the integrity of our body, our chastity, and property of great value. We are not justified to kill the unjust aggressor of our good name or reputation. All the above applies, even when the aggressor is drunk or crazy, and not responsible for his acts, because our rights come, not from his sin, but from the natural right we have to protect our life.

3. *The killing of an innocent party.* Under this heading we must place the killing of the unborn child. It is a mortal sin to use any means with such intention. For it is a sin of murder, generally two-fold, spiritual and corporal; no future consequences of the birth of the child can justify its murder. Parents should employ none but conscientious physicians, and never those guilty of criminal practices reprobated by the best and most scientific physicians, as well as by our holy Mother the Church. Equally guilty are those who, whether married or not, prevent conception.

Fighting is opposed to charity and is usually the initial step to killing; it must by all means be avoided.

Anger is an inordinate passion, provoking to resentment. Besides the inordinate passion of anger, there is an anger according to reason and praiseworthy, as Scripture says: "Be angry and sin not." Anger may be sinful in its object, or in its manner; in its object, when it is against reason, as when we desire punishment to one who has not deserved it, or more than he has deserved, or not with the proper end in view. In its manner, when the passion unduly manifests itself interiorly or exteriorly, and breaks out in cursing and swearing, and abuse.

Hatred, as opposed to brotherly love, is when its object is a person; it wishes evil to him, and is exactly the contrary of love. It directly paves the way to the worst excesses. The object of hatred may also be a person's vice, rather than himself, and although it is praiseworthy in itself, we must take care, lest it degenerate into hatred of the person, by inducing us to dislike, despise and avoid him without reasonable cause.

Revenge is a passion determining the will to punish some one for a real or supposed injury or crime. We have seen

that punishment for crimes is reserved to public authority. Private citizens must not desire the punishment of criminals, except in accordance with law and justice. Instead of taking private revenge for personal wrongs, which is unlawful, it is more Christianlike to pray for enemies, to forgive them, as Christ has done and directs.

Bad example or *scandal* is a word or act which is not only sinful, but has a tendency to induce others to do the same; it is therefore for them an occasion or inducement to offend God. If our Lord is so careful to protect the life of the body, how much more so is He to protect the life of the soul! Scandal, as such, is a far greater sin than the murder of the body. Hence there is no sin against which the Son of God has uttered more terrible anathemas. He says: "Woe to the world, because of scandals" (Mat. 18:7); and again: "He that shall scandalize one of these little ones that believe in Me, it were better for him that a millstone should be hanged about his neck, and that he should be cast into the depth of the sea." Scandal is a direct attack on the work of the Incarnation, and outrages every law of nature and friendship. Scandal is all the more enormous, when given by persons, who by virtue of their position or age, exert a greater influence on the minds of others such as, scandals given by parents to their children, or by those who hold a high and prominent position in society. Those guilty of it must do all in their power to repair its evil consequences.

369. *Q. What is the sixth Commandment?*

A. The sixth Commandment is: "Thou shalt not commit adultery."

Honor is next to life the greatest of our earthly possessions; the Divine Legislator protects it accordingly. Though here, as in the foregoing commandment, He only mentions the chief sin, yet He forbids all other sins that are of a character to lead to it, whatever may sully the purity of our body or soul. Next to our soul we have nothing more precious than our body. It is a vessel of honor, consecrated by Baptism and holy Communion, a member of Jesus Christ, a temple of the Holy Ghost, destined to rise glorious and to share in heaven the everlasting joys of the soul. We must, therefore, treat it with due respect. Who can tell the enormity of the sin forbidden by the sixth command-

ment? The language of all nations terms it shameful and infamous. It buried the world beneath the waters of the deluge. It drew down fire and brimstone from heaven upon the five wicked cities. It is the sin which draws in its train all other sins. It extinguishes all noble qualities in man, and degrades him to the level of the brute. The very name of it should not even be mentioned among Christians, as it is capable of sullying the lips that pronounce it and the ears that hear it. It is also the chief recruiting sin for hell.

Horrible as the sin of impurity is, yet the passion is most insidious. In order never to fall into the snares of the evil one, we suggest the following remedies and precautions. Watchfulness over our eyes and ears, frequent confession and Communion, constant occupation and a tender devotion to the Virgin of virgins. A little prayer to her morning and evening, for instance, three Hail Marys will obtain for us the necessary and abundant graces to have a good will and successfully combat the degrading passion of lust.

Temperance and sobriety are promoters of chastity; whilst excess in the use of strong drink leads to impurity. "Be not drunk with wine," says St. Paul, "wherein is luxury." (Eph. 5:18). To St. Titus (2:6) he wrote: "Young men in like manner exhort that they be sober."

370. *Q. What are we commanded by the sixth Commandment?*

A. We are commanded by the sixth Commandment to be pure in thought, and modest in all our looks, words, and actions.

To act reasonably, we must be prepared to use the means, if we desire the end. The Supreme Legislator by enacting the law that we shall not sully our body or soul through impurity, commanded that we should use all precautions and protect ourselves against a fall. If immodesty in looks, words and actions is forbidden, it follows that we should do exactly the reverse and be pure in our looks, words and actions. The devil, as a cunning strategist, knows fully well that he could not induce us all at once to fall into that horrible sin; therefore he begins by suggesting smaller excesses. We must absolutely refuse him admittance and beware of small beginnings.

371. *Q. What is forbidden by the sixth Commandment?*

A. The sixth Commandment forbids all unchaste freedom with another's wife or husband; also all immodesty with ourselves or others in looks, dress, words, or actions.

To say as little as possible and yet give the reader a clear idea of the guilt of impurity and its various kinds, is the object of all moralists writing on this subject. It will be ours. We will preface our remarks with a few general principles, which should be carefully borne in mind.

1. Lust or impurity of any kind is of itself a mortal sin. The reason is, first, because it overthrows the order of nature, and secondly, because the Author of nature positively makes it a serious offense. Suffice it to quote a text of St. Paul: "The works of the flesh are manifest, which are fornication, uncleanness, immodesty, luxury . . . of the which I foretell you, as I have foretold to you, that they who do such things shall not obtain the kingdom of God" (Gal. 5: 19-21).

2. In impure acts directly wilful there is no levity of matter; this has been the constant teaching of the Church.

3. When only indirectly wilful, there may be levity of matter; the gravity of the sin in this case depends upon the morality of the act that causes it.

To constitute a mortal sin, there must be full liberty, full advertence and full consent. If any of these conditions be lacking, there would either be no sin, or at most not a mortal sin. Impurity is indirectly wilful, when a certain act is performed, of a different kind, which brings about an impure effect. By wilfully attending an impure show, or reading an immoral book, impurity or a sin against nature may be the result and be wilful in its cause. If the cause is in itself indifferent and brings about no wilful pleasure or consent in the impure feeling, etc. that ensues, it may be considered as not wilful and consequently no sin.

We add a few words about the various kinds of sins forbidden by the sixth commandment and of the various immediate channels that lead to it.

It is certainly no sin for mothers to kiss their children; nor for relatives and friends, when they do so as simple

tokens of honest affection or social custom, provided that there be no complacency in evil desires. Kisses are sinful, when passionate, and when they are the cause of violent temptations or of consent to impure affections.

Touches are sinful, when positively immoral.

Looks may be more or less sinful, as they are more or less immoral, and influence the will more or less to impurity; whether they constitute a mortal or venial sin, depends upon circumstances. We should not forget the saying: "It is my eye that ruins my heart; it is by the windows (that is, the eyes) that death enters the soul."

Immoral talk is usually a mortal sin, as when one speaks with wicked delight on immoral topics; when the purpose is to lead hearers to impurity, when great scandal is given. Listening wilfully and with the pleasure of a prurient curiosity to such conversations is a mortal sin.

Women may easily commit mortal sin and give scandal by immodesty in dress. Let them bear in mind these admonitions of the Chief of the Apostles. "Let their adorning not be the outward plaiting of the hair, or the wearing of gold or the putting on of apparel; but the hidden man of the heart in the incorruptibility of a quiet and a meek spirit, which is rich in the sight of God" (1 Pet. 3: 3, 4). St. Paul says: "I will therefore that women in like manner (pray in every place) in decent apparel, adorning themselves with modesty and sobriety, and not with plaited hair, or gold, or pearls or costly attire, but as it becometh women professing godliness" (1 Tim. 2:9, 10). We will now consider the other grievous sins against the sixth commandment, and first the one directly forbidden by it, viz.: adultery.

Adultery is the sin of the married oblivious of the conjugal fidelity they vowed to their spouse at their marriage. Husband and wife must be true to each other in thought, word and deed. Adultery, besides being a mortal sin of impurity, is also a mortal sin of injustice. The circumstance of one's state of life must therefore be expressed in confession, when accusing one's self of that sin. The rights of married people to each other's fidelity are inalienable. This sin is committed by divorced persons who marry again. A divorce granted by any earthly tribunal does not affect the indissolubility of a valid marriage; hence

remarriage of divorcees creates an adulterous union; it may palliate their wickedness before the world, but it leaves them adulterers before God.

Fornication is the sexual relation between two unmarried persons. That fornication is a mortal sin is clear from Scripture: "Fornicators shall not possess the kingdom of God" (1 Cor. 6:9). Fornication is intrinsically bad, being opposed to the law of nature.

Incest is the sin committed between relations by blood or marriage up to the fourth degree. It adds a special sin to the sin of impurity, therefore in confession that circumstance must be expressed.

Rape is the oppression of woman against her will. This includes a double sin, specifically different.

Sacrilege is the violation of a place or person consecrated to God, through the sin of impurity.

Besides the above there are other sins still more abominable in the eyes of God; the sins against nature.

"The effeminate," says St. Paul, "shall not possess the kingdom of God" (1 Cor. 6:9). The sin of self-abuse is all the more dangerous, as we have always the occasion, the sting of the flesh, with us. To keep our bodies and souls from being sullied with this and other unmentionable sins, let us use the remedies and precautions as given in the answer to Qu. 369.

372. *Q. Does the sixth Commandment forbid the reading of bad and immodest books and newspapers?*

A. The sixth Commandment does forbid the reading of bad and immodest books and newspapers.

As the sixth commandment forbids under pain of mortal sin any word, look or action contrary to purity, the prohibition must include also whatever more or less directly leads to the transgression of that commandment. We will briefly consider here the reading of bad and immodest books, attending immodest plays and dancing.

Immoral literature. The danger accruing from the reading of immoral literature, contained in books or newspapers, can hardly be over-estimated. It is the great weapon of the devil at the present day. Our age being an age of commercialism, with authors especially of light literature the question is not how they may do the most good, but how

they can make the most money. This naturally leads them to cater to the vile appetites of the readers. This is the forte of most modern novels, worthless as to literature, but destructive to the mind and heart. The teaching of moralists on the question of immoral literature may be summed up as follows: The writing, publishing, selling, keeping, lending and reading of bad books and newspapers is unlawful, and sinful either on account of the scandal given, of coöperation in evil with the author, or of the near danger of sin.

1. The scandal given is all the more criminal as its influence for evil is greater. A prominent person may easily be guilty of a mortal sin by buying and reading a bad book or newspaper, and thereby influencing others to follow his example.

2. Coöperation in evil with the authors or publishers certainly exists in the readers, for it enables the former to carry on their damnable work of destruction. Men working in printing establishments whence nothing but immoral literature is issued, are obliged to seek work elsewhere. News agents or boys, selling immoral books or newspapers, are coöperators in the evil and playing the part of the devil; they must devise other means of making a living. Subscribing to an immoral periodical is helping the editor to carry on his devilish crusade. Saloon keepers, barbers and the like cannot be excused for providing such literature to draw trade or amuse their patrons. Advertisements of immoral books and newspapers, medicines and physicians are equally against the natural law.

3. *Near danger of sin.* In determining whether the reading of a book or newspaper constitutes a proximate occasion of sin or not, we must take into consideration the manner and the matter, or how and what the author writes; whether the matter is actually immoral or liable to excite the passions and teach vice or make it appear pleasant and desirable. If so, such literature is forbidden under pain of mortal sin. We must also consider the disposition of the reader; what influences one, may not influence another; one may get his mind filled with evil thoughts, even while reading a good book, whilst another remains indifferent. A Catholic is in conscience obliged to patronize the Catholic Press; he must have something to read; he therefore should procure for himself and family good reading matter,

which he can easily do by patronizing the Catholic Press. Every Catholic home should have its Catholic papers and periodicals, besides other pious and instructive reading.

Theatres. Theatres in themselves can be a power for good, as well as for evil; the eye is quicker than the ear. A good performance may sometimes be worth a good sermon. There is no denying, however, that the stage nowadays has considerably degenerated; the object now is to draw crowds for gain, and here again it is found that catering to the lower instincts of the crowds pays best. Catholics must make showmen and managers feel that they withhold their patronage from unclean performances and from men who, like vultures, live on spiritual carcasses. The teaching of moralists on the subject may be summed up as follows:

1. Assisting at a performance which is not considerably loose, may not be a mortal sin, unless one knows by experience that it is for him a proximate occasion of sin or of violent temptations. If assisting thereat is prompted by a desire to see immoral representations, it will generally be a mortal sin. 2, Scandal may often determine whether it is lawful to assist at a certain play; frequenting theatres that have a bad reputation is a mortal sin for influential persons. 3, Parents should not take their children to a show, unless they are morally certain that nothing immoral or dangerous will be offered. 4, Buying tickets to immoral shows is coöperating with the showmen in their destructive profession. 5, Composers of immoral shows, etc., are certainly guilty of mortal sin, because of the scandal they give.

Catholics must have the courage of their convictions, and not be afraid of manifesting their disgust and disapprobation when deceived at a performance.

Balls or *dances.* Dancing may be an innocent recreation or it may be a performance costing the loss of divine sanctifying grace. There are instances in Holy Scripture of innocent dancing; but dances frequently, like theatres and literature, are powerful weapons of destruction in the hands of the devil. The morality of a dance chiefly depends upon the persons dancing and the manner of dancing. Public dances are generally more dangerous than private family parties, to which are admitted only a few friends. There can be no general rule to approve or to condemn all dances.

Masked balls are, on the whole, most dangerous to purity. Catholics should never be seen at balls that are an outrage to sound morals. It is well for them to remember the saying of St. Peter Chrysologus: "He who wishes to dance with the devil, cannot rejoice with Christ."

LESSON THIRTY-FOUR

FROM THE SEVENTH TO THE END OF THE TENTH COMMANDMENT

373. *Q. What is the seventh Commandment?*
A. The seventh Commandment is: Thou shalt not steal.

After safeguarding the greatest of natural goods, life and honor in the fifth and sixth commandment, the Supreme Legislator places in security the next in value, property or fortune. The seventh commandment: "Thou shalt not steal" is the only true basis of the right of property. Possession, even immemorial, is but a fact, which alone cannot constitute a right, inasmuch as it may be destroyed by another fact. Again, human laws protecting property are but the expression of human wills, which alone do not and cannot constitute a right, inasmuch as one man has not of himself a right to command another man. The right of property, like every other right, is divine in its essence. Socialism is described in the following words in the Encyclical Letter of Pope Leo XIII dated May 15, 1891: "The Socialists pretend that all private property should be suppressed, that the property of each should be the common property of all, and that its administration should belong to the municipalities or to the State. By this transfer of properties and the equal division among citizens of riches and commodities, they flatter themselves to have found an efficacious remedy to the present social evils." There is a world-wide difference between the socialism of the first Christians, and the present anti-Christian and fanatic system of socialism. The social, moral and economic equilibrium cannot be preserved, except by the respect of private rights and the keeping of the commandment: "*Thou shalt not steal.*"

374. *Q. What are we commanded by the seventh Commandment?*

A. By the seventh Commandment we are commanded to give all men what belongs to them and to respect their property.

To understand rightly our obligations and duties in regard to justice, we must know that others have rights which we must respect; rights in the one necessarily create in the other the duty respecting them. Leo XIII. in his Encyclical beginning with the words *Rerum Novarum,* whilst refuting the pernicious fallacy of socialism, gives us the following four arguments establishing the right of private property, which all are bound to respect.

I. The condition of the laboring classes demands it. Man, being a reasonable being, acts for a purpose. Why does the laborer work, if not for a wage or its equivalent. This he can either spend entirely in eating, drinking and amusements, or he can invest part of it in something durable, which will bring him a return. This will enable him to live more comfortably and raise himself and his family to a more favorable condition. This end in view will prove to the laborer the strongest incentive to work and to sobriety. Without hope of ever acquiring, deterioration of his condition must be the result.

II. Private and personal property is a natural right of man. Great is the difference between man and irrational animals. Instinct impels these to the conservation and defense of their own life and to the propagation of their species. Present things and within their reach suffice to that double purpose. Their instinct does not lead them any further. Human nature is entirely different. Man embraces by his intelligence the future as well as the present; he is the master of his actions and becomes, under divine guidance, his own law, his own providence. That is why he has the right to select the things which he considers most suitable, not only to his present, but also to his future wants. Nature then must have placed at his disposal means to make permanent provision for the future. No wonder then that mankind, with few exceptions, has sanctioned the right of private and personal ownership. The civil law of all nations confirms the natural law, and protects it by force. Finally, divine law seals the natural law, and forbids under severe penalties even the desire of what belongs to others.

III. Private and personal ownership reposes upon the right of the family. Man holds from nature, independently of society, the right to marry and to beget children; this right brings with it the right to provide for the wants of the family, of which the father is the natural provider. The State has no rights contrary to the rights of the family, which existed before the State did, and without which there could be no State. The State has in this no other right than to protect the rights of the individual and of the family. If the right of private and personal ownership is necessary to the individual to provide permanently for his personal wants, it is then all the more necessary to the head of the family to provide for needs more numerous and more diverse. And the State must respect and protect these rights, which it does not create, but is bound to recognize.

IV. Leo XIII. shows in a few lines the fatal consequences of theories that would do away with personal and private property. He sums up those results as follows: "Trouble in every rank of society, odious and unbearable slavery of all citizens, the door wide open to jealousy, discontent and discord, talent and ability deprived of their incentives, wealth destroyed in its source, and instead of the equality dreamed by socialists, no other equality would remain but in poverty, misery and wretchedness." Since men have a strictly exclusive right to what belongs to them, we must, as commanded by the seventh commandment, respect that right.

375. *Q. What is forbidden by the seventh Commandment?*

A. The seventh Commandment forbids all unjust taking or keeping of what belongs to another.

Moralists devote entire treatises to the matter involved in this one answer. Disregard for the property rights of our neighbor is forbidden. This includes, in the first place, the unjust taking of what belongs to another, against his will. The restriction is added to distinguish theft from usury, which is also an unjust taking, but not entirely against the will of the man, who pays usurious interest. A wife would not be stealing by taking from her husband the money which he would otherwise squander in drink and dissipation, because the husband cannot be reasonably

opposed to it. The taking of what belongs to another in cases of extreme necessity would not be unjust, and consequently would not be theft, provided no more is taken than is necessary to tide it over. Occult compensation may also be a way of taking what belongs to another without being unjust, in the sense which Catholic theologians attach to it. It means the taking of something from another, in order that we may have what belongs to us. To be lawful, the following conditions are required: 1st, That the person from whom we take it, is actually a debtor to us. 2nd, That the debt be at least morally certain. 3rd, That the debt be actually due. 4th, That there be *no other way* of recovering what belongs to us. 5th, That all temporal or spiritual damage of the debtor be avoided as far as possible; that is, that he, in some manner, be informed that the debt no longer exists, so as not to leave him in bad faith or force him or his heirs to pay it over again. 6th, That precautions be taken that no damage result to a third party, that, for instance, a servant may not be accused of the theft of the thing, which has disappeared. 7th, That no more be taken than we can justly claim. That occult compensation is not against justice is clear from the fact that we take only what belongs to us, or its equivalent.

It is often a very hard question to determine when theft is a mortal sin, or a venial sin. Unjust taking of what belongs to another is always unlawful, however small the object may be, because the proprietor has a right to it which must be respected. A serious matter in theft is determined by the grave detriment which it causes the owner. Theft may differently affect the persons from whom we unjustly take. What may be a serious matter to a poor person, may be of no significance to another. Our best theologians in the United States consider it a serious matter, making one guilty of a mortal sin, the taking of 25 to 50 cents from a beggar; one dollar from those in easy circumstances, five to ten dollars from the rich. This sum they consider as always a serious matter, even in thefts from large corporations. This does not mean, however, that it can absolutely be determined mathematically, as if even the addition of one cent could of a venial sin make a mortal sin; other things must be taken into consideration, as for instance, the intention and wicked disposition of the thief. In thefts of children at home of things to which they have

no right, moralists require at least double the amount taken from strangers to make it a mortal sin. Often the theft of a small amount may constitute a mortal sin, because erroneous judgment may make a serious matter of it. Small thefts, in themselves venial sins only, may by frequent repetition develop into a serious matter; cheating a little every day by under-weight or poorer quality of goods would soon be a serious matter. What we said above about unjust taking applies also to unjust keeping of what belongs to another; because the owner has the right of usufruct of what belongs to him. He has the right to see that his property fructify to him. We are, therefore, responsible for the consequences of our unjust keeping. What applies to the individual in the matter of theft applies also to a corporation; corporations and trusts are, as a rule, the worst thieves. Speculators, especially when they put up "a corner" in the market, monopolists and the like, are assuredly not guiltless, to say the least.

376. *Q. Are we bound to restore ill-gotten goods?*
A. We are bound to restore ill-gotten goods, or the value of them, as far as we are able; otherwise we cannot be forgiven.

Moralists give us two sources for the obligation to make restitution to the person whose rights we have unjustly disregarded. The first is the thing in itself that belongs to another, which may be in our possession even without sin, as when I buy unconsciously a stolen article from a thief, or when I take something belonging to another by mistaking it for an almost identical article belonging to me, and I find out the owner afterwards. The second is when I keep anything which I know to belong to another, or deprive him of it, even without any benefit to myself, as when I burn another man's house or store. The first source of restitution is considered in this question; the second or unjust damnification in the next.

The following self-evident principles will make plain the obligation of making restitution of anything in our possession that may not belong to us. 1, *The thing belongs to the owner.* By virtue of the right of property, the goods everywhere retain their relation to the owner, that he may use them for his own advantage and claim them wherever they be, and involve the duty on the retainer to restore them

to the owner; unless his right be barred by a statute of limitation. 2, *The thing fructifies to the owner.* The owner has the right not only to the goods, but also to what they might have brought him, if in his possession. Stealing a horse from a man who makes his living with it, imposes on the thief the obligation not only of restoring the horse, but also the gain he made with it, whilst in his possession. The calf that should be born after the thief has stolen the cow, equally belongs to the rightful owner of the cow. 3, *The thing naturally perishing is lost to the owner.* A stolen horse dying a natural death while in the thief's possession is a loss to the rightful owner. 4, *No one should benefit by his ill-gotten goods.* This is a corollary of the second principle. The above principles apply only to the possessor in good faith. To make the above principles clearer, we will suppose that, when the possessor realizes that the thing belongs to some one else, it either is still in his possession, or has perished, or is now in the possession of a third party.

In the first case, he either received it gratuitously, and then he must restore it to the owner, or he bought it from the thief, and then to protect himself he could return it to the thief, and claim his money from him, because he has no obligation of being an innocent loser. In the second case, when the goods have perished whilst in his possession, before the real owner is found or discovered, the possessor in good faith is not bound to make restitution, unless he should have benefited by their destruction or consumption; the amount of the profit derived therefrom should then be restored to the lawful owner. If the goods accidentally perished, whilst in the hands of the buyer, to whom a possessor in good faith sold it, the question is not clear whether any one in that case is obliged to make restitution, except, of course, the original thief. In this, like in all other dubious questions, it is safe to follow the civil code of the country we are in. In the third case, viz., in the event that at the time of the appearance of the rightful owner, the goods are in the hands of a third party, to whom the possessor in good faith either gave or sold them. If he donated them to a third party, he is not obliged to make restitution, unless the gift benefited him; but charity commands him to warn the parties concerned, that is, the rightful owner or the third party, if

he can do so without great inconvenience. If he sold it to a third party, he must return the price to the seller, when the rightful owner comes in possession of his goods; he must also give to the owner any gains he may have made on the goods that did not belong to him.

If the goods cannot be returned, then we must restore their value as far as we are able. The ill-gotten goods themselves must be restored to the owner, if it can be done without very great inconvenience. There are various ways of making restitution without its being necessary for the thief to appear as such before the world, and to suffer the terrible consequences of his own revelation. He can restore the value of the ill-gotten goods, either by mail or through the medium of a friend, or of his confessor, without fear of detection. If restitution is to be made to the government, issuing bills for money in the treasury, and being thus indebted to the bearer of the bill, the destruction of the bill would decrease the debt of the government to the extent of the amount stolen.

Ability to make restitution and unwillingness to do so is a barrier to the reception of the sacraments. My sin cannot be forgiven in confession, unless I am disposed to right the wrong committed, or to do all that God or the Church requires of me. If I am unable to make restitution for the present, nothing prevents me from receiving absolution, provided I am disposed to restore as soon as I can, and be prepared to devise ways and means to enable me to do so in the future. It is clear that stealing is the straight road to poverty, or to hell, and sometimes to both. When in doubt as to our obligations in the matter, we must consult the proper authorities, for instance, our confessor, whose duty it is to instruct us therein.

The seventh commandment requires us also to observe the following points: We must pay our debts; we must not take advantage of the poor, by obliging them to work for starvation wages, far below what ought to be paid to them. We must also take care of the goods intrusted to us, and allow no waste or loss therefrom to the owner.

377. *Q. Are we obliged to repair the damage we have unjustly caused?*

A. We are bound to repair the damage we have unjustly caused.

Theologians require three conditions to oblige us to repair the damage we have done. 1st, That our action or its omission be unjust; 2nd, That it was the efficacious cause of the damage, which really followed; 3rd, That the commission or omission was a formal sin.

1. The first condition refers to the case when we without lawful right deprive our neighbor of something, to which he had a strict right. We would also be guilty of injustice and be bound to restitution, when even unconsciously we caused the damage, and did not prevent its consequences, if it was in our power. We may accidentally drop a lighted match, which may be the cause of a fire, unless we put it out, when we notice it; if we do not, we are guilty of incendiarism and obliged to repair the damage. A druggist, who inadvertently gives poison, instead of medicine, is guilty of murder, if he neglected to correct his mistake, after discovering it and before the harm was done. We would be guilty and liable for the injury caused if, by unlawful means we would prevent another from securing a position or making the profit, to which he is entitled; thus would a merchant be guilty of injustice and obliged to restitution, if, through fraud he prevented a competitor from making a bargain. In like manner, officials, such as mayors, governors, or persons in high authority are guilty of injustice and obliged to restitution, when they certainly foresee that the community will be damaged and actually is so by their unworthy appointees.

2. The second condition is self-evident, because it is very plain that, if no damage was done, even if we had the intention to do it, or if our act was not the cause of it, we are not obliged to make restitution.

3. The third condition is also very clear, because if in case there is no formal sin, it must be because there is no human act, that is, no act with full reflexion and freedom; now it does not seem natural that a man should be held accountable for the consequences of any but a human act on his part. The damage done by a drunken or a crazy man, is rather a misfortune than an unjust damnification. If, however, a drunkard knows, from past experience, that he is liable in his drunkenness to steal, to destroy goods or property, he is responsible for the damage he caused in his drunkenness, because the damage was wilful in its cause. Besides the theological fault or the formal sin, or even

without it, there may be a juridical fault, or a fault punishable by the civil laws. Ignorance, for instance, is a sufficient excuse for an offense against the law of God, and would make a transgression of it faultless; but such is not the case with the civil law; ignorance does not excuse its transgressors. Supposing then that before the law we are guilty of having caused a damage, even without having committed any sin thereby, we may be obliged, even in conscience, to make restitution, but only after the judge has passed sentence. The reason is that such a sentence is just and requisite for the welfare of the whole community.

378. *Q. What is the eighth Commandment?*

A. The eighth Commandment is: Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor.

By the eighth commandment God places in security our reputation and good name, goods often dearer than life itself, goods whose loss is capable of poisoning all the enjoyments of earth, goods without which dignities, riches, and talents, even, are a burden. By it He intends to rid society of sins of suspicion, dissimulation, hypocrisy, lying, which, when they are permitted to reign, occasion so much trouble and hatred, that men hardly differ from devils. By it He restores truth, confidence of men in one another, good faith, which tends to make the earth an anticipated paradise. All our interests are protected in the Decalogue by a sacred barrier. The Decalogue is, indeed, the most complete, the wisest and the most beneficent code of morality.

379. *Q. What are we commanded by the eighth Commandment?*

A. We are commanded by the eighth Comandment to speak the truth in all things, and to be careful of the honor and reputation of everyone.

Speech is one of the most admirable gifts that God has bestowed upon man. It distinguishes him from all other terrestrial creatures. By it he sings the praises of his Creator, by it he forms and maintains with his fellow-men those relations, sweet and useful, which are the glory of the human race and the happiness of families. These are the noble ends for which God endowed man with speech. But, since the sin of Adam, the tongue is the chief instru-

ment that defiles the earth and disturbs society. In the Decalogue God recalls to the mind of man the natural law and commands him anew: "Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor." God willed that judicial authority should endure in the world to terminate differences. When appearing before the judges of the land as witness, a man must tell the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth, without regard even to his own temporal interest. Man is by virtue of the eighth commandment obliged not only to bear true witness in court, but to tell the truth on all occasions. He must love his neighbor as himself, he must prize his neighbor's reputation and good name like his own, and give it the protection which he has a right to demand for himself, and endeavor, by means at his disposal to prevent its loss. Abstaining from evil is not all that is required of a Christian; he must also do good. We must likewise not be indifferent to the reputation of our fellow-men, but make positive efforts that they may enjoy the great blessing of a good name.

380. *Q. What is forbidden by the eighth Commandment?*

A. The eighth Commandment forbids all rash judgments, back-biting, slanders, and lies.

We have treated in the explanation of the second commandment of the enormity of a false oath, and the bearing of false witness in court. We will only add here the opinion of St. Thomas in regard to a false witness: "He commits three sins; perjury, since he utters a falsehood after having sworn to speak the truth; injustice, since he wrongs his neighbor, towards whom he is bound to observe charity and justice; lying, since he asserts or denies a thing contrary to the truth of which he is aware." The eighth commandment forbids also all false witness, with less solemnity, such as, rash judgment, detraction, slander and lies.

Rash judgment is a firm persuasion or an inward admission of the malice of our neighbor's action, based on weak motives. Rash judgment is, of its nature, a mortal sin. St. Thomas sees in it contempt of the neighbor. For a rash judgment, however, to be a mortal sin, the following four conditions must concur. 1st, That the action we ascribe to our neighbor be greatly detrimental to his reputa-

tion; 2nd, That we take the supposed wicked action of our neighbor for a positive fact; that in our mind it be not merely a doubt or opinion, but a positive assent; 3rd, That at the time we realize the wickedness of this rash judgment; 4th, That to some extent we realize at the time that the motives are entirely insufficient to justify such a judgment; otherwise we are simply making a mistake.

There are various other stages of mental action preceding rash judgment, such as suspicion, opinion, doubt, which are also forbidden by the eighth commandment, but are less criminal than rash judgment. We must try always to put the most favorable interpretation on our neighbor's actions; and if his action is such that it cannot be approved, we should at least excuse his intention, or make allowance for the circumstances in which he was placed.

Backbiting or detraction is the unjust blackening of the reputation of our neighbor in his absence. If done in his presence, it is called *contumely*. All those who have a reputation in the minds of the hearers are liable to be blackened by the detractor; even the dead are liable, though detraction cannot hurt them, like the living; also moral bodies or corporations, such as a city, or a religious community. Detraction may be either direct, when the intention of the detractor is to hurt some one's reputation, or indirect and material, when joking or gossip is his motive.

Detraction is, of its kind, a mortal sin. It is taking away from the neighbor that which is dearest to him. It is the worst kind of theft. The grievousness of detraction may be best understood by the manner in which Holy Scripture speaks of the detractor. "The detractor is the abomination of men" (Prov. 24:9). "The railers," says St. Paul, "shall not possess the kingdom of heaven" (1 Cor. 6: 10). Hence we would commit a mortal sin when we relate any defects of the neighbor with the intention of considerably hurting his reputation, or when, without such perverse intention, we foresee that our tale-bearing will probably cause great detriment to his good name. Sometimes even a small insignificant remark may be the cause of great damage; in thereby preventing, for instance, our neighbor from securing a position, to which he aspires. To know whether detraction will cause great damage to the good name of another, we must consider circumstances, that is, the position of the detractor, of the person spoken about

and of the listener. Each of these points has its weight in forming a judgment of the damage done. If the detractor is a garrulous tale-bearer with a known grudge against the party he speaks about, his testimony will not seriously hurt the other's reputation. If the party spoken about is known to be an all around bad character, he cannot be damaged very seriously by the revelation of another defect. Detraction will hurt less when the listener is known to take no stock in tale-bearing. To help us to distinguish its greater or less guilt we will add a few illustrations.

1. It may not be a mortal sin to say of a vain, worldly young man that he is somewhat immorally inclined, when it would certainly be, if said of a God-fearing exemplary person.

2. It may be enough to throw an aspersion that would do serious damage by simply alluding to something, without mentioning it, with the remark that the revelation would make the listener blush.

3. The revelation of a natural or physical defect would generally be but a slight detraction.

4. It would not be a mortal sin to reveal to a trustworthy friend an insult offered us; confidential conversation of husband and wife among themselves about the faults, etc., of others, are at most, only venial faults.

5. The loss of reputation on one point, leaves one's good name untarnished on all others; if a person is known to be a drunkard, we cannot therefore call him a thief.

6. To manifest a crime for which one has been sentenced by the public and lawful authority, is no detraction, as it is the purpose of the courts, for the common welfare, to deprive the culprit of his good name in this matter. The sentence of the judge is published and leaves to all others the right to publish it, that all may be on their guard against wicked men.

7. If a crime, even if not judicially tried, has become public, any one is at liberty to discuss it.

For just reasons it is permitted to reveal the crime or a hidden defect of another, provided it be necessary for a lawful purpose, and that no more be said than is required. The following instances are a few illustrations of it: when a marriage is about to be contracted, the hidden impediment between the parties must be revealed; a defendant is entitled to reveal the crimes of witnesses, in order to impeach their

authority; when answering enquiries about the true religion, the fallacies of the false ones may be exposed.

The following remarks will illustrate the guilt of one who listens to detraction.

1. He who induces another to detract, commits a mortal or a venial sin, according to the gravity of the detraction, because he is the efficacious cause of it.

2. He who rejoices in listening to serious detraction on account of the hatred or dislike he bears the person spoken about, sins mortally against charity, because he takes delight in a great damage to his neighbor.

3. We should have the courage to stop directly, or indirectly by changing the subject of the conversation of a detractor, but if we fail to do so out of fear or through cowardice we would not be guilty of a mortal sin, unless it were our duty to stop it.

Slander or *Calumny* is charging our neighbor with a crime of which he is innocent. It is a sin of the same species as detraction, because both disregard the right of the neighbor to his good name. All the above principles apply therefore equally to slander. In addition to all we have said about the detractor, the slanderer is also a liar.

Lies. To lie is to speak in a manner contrary to one's thoughts, with the intention of deceiving the neighbor. There are three kinds of lies; the jocose, which is told for amusement; the officious, which is told to procure some good or to prevent an evil either to ourselves or to our neighbor; the malicious, which is told with the design to injure some one. To place the principles concerning lies in a correct light, we must say a word about *mental restriction.* This is a restriction made in the mind of the meaning of the words spoken. There are two kinds of mental restriction or reservation, the proper and the improper. We have proper mental restriction, when, mentally, the words uttered are distorted to a sense which nothing justifies; as, when asked whether we ever saw Rome, and we reply in the affirmative, adding mentally, in books or pictures. Improper mental restriction exists when the meaning of the speaker is not the obvious meaning, but can be somewhat perceived, as when we say: "A man sleeps;" although he actually is dead; as also when asked about a secret we are obliged to keep, we answer: "I do not know;" meaning

that we do not know it, so as to be able to communicate it.

A lie is an utterance contrary to our thoughts with the intention of deceiving. A lie can be uttered by word, by writing, by gesture, by action. By speaking contrarily to our thoughts, or conviction, we may be guilty of telling a lie, even when what we say is really the truth. A lie must essentially contain the intention of deceiving, that is, an assertion must be put in such a way, as to induce the hearer to accept it.

A lie is intrinsically bad, and therefore cannot be told even to avoid the greatest evils; but in itself it is only a venial sin; unless it be a malicious lie, and then the gravity of the sin will depend upon the amount of damage done.

Proper mental restriction is to be considered as a lie.

Improper mental restriction is lawful, when there is a good reason for it. We have proofs in Holy Scripture of Christ Himself using it: (John 7:8). He denied that He would go up to Jerusalem for the festival day, although He afterwards did go, but in secret, not openly as the Apostles had expected.

(Matt. 24:36). He denied that he knew the day of judgment, understanding mentally that He did not know it in order to reveal it, as the Apostles had asked Him to tell them when it would be.

381. *Q. What must they do who have lied about their neighbor and seriously injured his character?*

A. They who have lied about their neighbor and seriously injured his character must repair the injury done as far as they are able, otherwise they will not be forgiven.

As each one has a strict right to his reputation, it is clear that the detractor and the calumniator are in conscience obliged to repair the injury, and make restitution for all other losses, which may have resulted from their sin, and which they foresaw or could easily have foreseen. It is understood, however, that said defamation of character must possess the three conditions specified in the answer to Qu. 377. The reparation must be made in an efficacious manner; if one has defamed the character of another through the newspapers, he must use the same channel to repair

the injury. The manner of reparation is different according as the defamation is detraction or calumny. If it is calumny, that is, if one has lied about the character of his neighbor, he must openly retract it, even if, in the event that he cannot otherwise repair the injury, he were to pose as a liar before the public. If the offense was detraction, he cannot recant by saying that he told a lie, because the supposition is that he had been talking about a real defect; but he can say, with a mental restriction, that he was deceived, or mistaken, meaning that his fault was the result of his being deceived by the devil or his blind passion. An attempt at reparation might sometimes make matters worse, by arousing again the curiosity of hearers, who may have forgotten the incident. In that case, it may be preferable to place the offended person in the most favorable light in the community by praising him, or speaking of his good qualities. The detractor or calumniator is obliged to make amends, not only with the party or parties in whose presence he may have defamed his neighbor, but with all others who to his knowledge have since heard of it. The detractor or calumniator is also obliged to make pecuniary restitution for the pecuniary loss his defamation of character may have entailed. It is readily seen how hard it is to make the proper amends for an offense against the eighth commandment. The process is like plucking the feathers from a chicken, scattering them to the four winds, and then trying to gather them up and replace them. That is why the Catechism says that the detractor must repair the injury as far as he is able.

The following are some of the instances when such restitution is not required:

1. If there has been no real defamation; either because the hearers did not believe the detractor, or because they did not understand him.
2. If the infamy has been taken away or entirely forgotten.
3. If the injured person has through other channels lost his reputation in this matter, for instance, when his hidden crime became public.
4. If the injured person has forgiven the defamer.
5. If the injured person has returned the compliment, by lying about the character of his offender.
6. In the event of physical or moral impossibility.

As this is of its nature an obligation binding under mortal sin, we cannot be forgiven unless we are disposed to do what is right. As it is an obligation imposed by natural law, no one can dispense from it.

382. *Q. What is the ninth Commandment?*

A. The ninth Commandment is: Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's wife.

So important did God deem the keeping of the sixth commandment that He placed, as it were, the ninth commandment as a barrier around it; interior purity must necessarily bring about the exterior. An action, however bad in itself, is not imputable to us but in so far as it is voluntary. An immoral act is preceded by an immoral thought and an immoral desire. Since impurity is the broad road that leads to eternal perdition, since purity is a virtue so hard to preserve in the midst of all the dangers which surround us, it is no wonder that the Supreme Legislator, who is at the same time our heavenly physician, should have ordered us to abstain from desires of what it is unlawful to have or to do.

383. *Q. What are we commanded by the ninth Commandment?*

A. We are commanded by the ninth Commandment to keep ourselves pure in thought and desire.

Purity in thought, as well as in acts, is a virtue that must be acquired by repeated acts like all other virtues. Hence the Catechism says that we are commanded to keep ourselves pure. It must be then very much in our power to keep ourselves pure. We must not forget, however, that purity is, at the same time, a gift of God that can be obtained only in the manner that He has determined. "As I knew," says the wise man, "that I could not otherwise be continent, except God gave it . . . I went to the Lord and besought Him" (Wisd. 8:21). St. Paul felt the sting of the flesh, and he prayed to God that it might depart from him, but he was told that, though it would remain, God's grace was sufficient to overcome it (*2* Cor. 12:8). Yet the grace of God without our coöperation will not make us be pure of heart and mind. We must on our part use the necessary precautions, such as we have suggested in answer to Qu. 369, and then rely upon the grace

of God to strengthen our good will; we shall then find it possible to do all that the ninth commandment prescribes.

384. *Q. What is forbidden by the ninth Commandment?*

A. The ninth Commandment forbids unchaste thoughts, desires of another's wife or husband, and all other unlawful, impure thoughts and desires.

The ninth commandment forbids interior sins contrary to purity, that is, those acts which are entirely perfected in the will. In an internal act, three things must be had, before it is wilful and sinful, viz.: suggestion, delectation and consent. Suggestion is nothing else than the idea of evil presented to the mind. Delectation is the carnal pleasure, which is occasioned by the thought of the evil. Delectation is culpable, if it is not renounced as soon as one becomes aware of it. If one takes pleasure in it with full advertence and deliberate intention, there is perfect consent, and consequently, a mortal sin. If the will only half consents, the sin is only venial; if the will does not consent at all, there is no sin at all. Moral theologians generally distinguish three kinds of interior sins; desire, joy and morose delectation.

Desire is an act of the will by which one deliberately intends to commit the sin he thinks of; its object is the future. Joy is deliberate complacency in the evil done; its object is the past. Morose delectation is deliberate complacency in the evil object before the will, its object is the present.

Desire of future evil or joy over a past evil, are of the same malice, that is, are either mortal or venial sins, as the external acts which are their ultimate object. If one, for instance, desires to commit sin with a married person, he commits a double mortal sin, just as if he actually committed the act he desires. Approval of or joy over a sin is the same as the wicked intent of the will that caused the first sin. The question may be asked whether we are allowed to rejoice over a bad action, on account of some good effect that followed it. The answer is that it is permissible to rejoice over the good effect brought about by a bad cause; so may citizens rejoice for the restoration of peace, though effected by the killing of a tyrant.

Morose delectation, or the dwelling with delight upon an

evil act, is a sin of the same criminal species as the crime dwelt upon.

385. *Q. Are impure thoughts and desires always sins?*
A. Impure thoughts and desires are always sins, unless they displease us and we try to banish them.

We may distinguish four kinds of thoughts: rejected thoughts, dismissed thoughts, morose thoughts and consummated thoughts.

Rejected thoughts are thoughts which, as soon as we perceive them, we banish with horror and indignation. These thoughts are not culpable, however wicked their object may be. Should they return a thousand times, we practise an act of purity each time that we reject them. That is why Almighty God allows temptations, that they may serve us as so many occasions to practise virtue and gather merits for heaven. Dismissed thoughts are thoughts, which we drive away indeed, but with some degree of negligence. These thoughts are only venial sins. Morose thoughts are those causing morose delectation, and are sinful as we have said in the preceding question.

Consummated thoughts are thoughts which are accompanied with a desire to put them into execution. Though a person should not proceed so far, the crime is nevertheless committed in the will. In confession, then, their nature must be specified.

A thought may be voluntary in itself or in its cause. It is voluntary in itself, when one admits it, occupies himself with it, takes pleasure in it, knowing that he does wrong. It is voluntary in its cause, when, wilfully and unnecessarily, one looks at, says, reads, listens to or does anything that is of a nature to raise an evil thought.

386. *Q. What is the tenth Commandment?*
A. The tenth Commandment is: Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's goods.

The ten commandments are not the work of human legislators. These forbid only the guilty action, murder, for example, or theft. They punish only the evil that has been committed. The thought, the desire, the will to commit crime, escape them. They cut down the evil tree but they cannot tear up the roots, because the roots of evil are hidden in the hearts of men. God does much more; He

not only forbids the guilty actions but penetrates into the lowest depths of the soul, and crushes the evil in its very germ, the desire, the thought. The Decalogue is intended rather to prevent crime than to punish it.

387. *Q. What are we commanded by the tenth Commandment?*

A. By the tenth Commandment we are commanded to be content with what we have, and to rejoice in our neighbor's welfare.

The tenth commandment commands all that is necessary to prevent us from coveting our neighbor's goods. The Catechism suggests two efficacious means to attain this end, viz.: 1, To be content with what we have. 2, To rejoice in our neighbor's welfare.

I. We have every reason to be content with what we have, provided we have obtained it in conformity with the law of God. Every good gift comes from above; if then, notwithstanding our best endeavors, according to our duties in life, we should be poor, while others make a fortune, we should not be discouraged; because, as far as our last end is concerned, we are better off than they; there is less danger for us to lose our souls than for them. We cannot lose sight of the fact that an all-wise Providence rules the world; nature demands that there should be a difference in financial conditions. The world would not be worth living in, if all were rich. If poverty is a result of our sins, we should be prepared to take it as a temporal punishment, rather than hell or purgatory. If it is no fault of our own, we should rejoice for being so much more like the God-Man, who had no stone whereon to rest His head. Faith teaches us that not a hair falls from our head without the permission of our heavenly Father, who cares for the lilies of the field and the birds of the air, and certainly much more for us, whom He created to His own image and likeness. He allows us to have crosses, but never too heavy ones for our weak shoulders. Poverty is so desirable, that the noblest men and women voluntarily choose it, as their heritage in this world. Contentment with what we have is surely one of the happiest dispositions in this world, and efficaciously prevents injustice in thought and desire.

II. Charity demands that we love our neighbor and wish him well; jealousy is one of the blackest of vices. If we

look upon him as a brother, we should feel happy when he succeeds; for his success is not our loss. If he becomes rich, we should rather pity than envy him, since it makes his path to heaven so much more difficult.

If well penetrated with these two sentiments, which are, at the same time, two real obligations, we will keep the seventh and tenth commandments to perfection.

388. *Q. What is forbidden by the tenth Commandment?*

A. The tenth Commandment forbids all desires to take or keep wrongfully what belongs to another.

The tenth commandment acts as a defense against our inordinate inclinations which would do us such great injury, if we permitted ourselves to desire everything we like. In laying upon us a prohibition against cupidity, God blunts the spurs of the passions, which excite us to all kinds of evil actions; and besides affords better opportunities to attend to our spiritual affairs. The following considerations will show us the reasonableness of the prohibition contained in the tenth Commandment. 1, Stolen property rather oppresses the heart, than satisfies it. 2, We do not like others to steal our property. 3, The happiness of man does not consist in earthly goods. 4, The desire of riches can never be satisfied; the more we have, the more we wish to have. 5, God promises all that is necessary to those who first seek His kingdom. 6, What a shame to be found out as a thief! 7, Injustice is not the road to wealth. 8, By injustice we gain but little and lose all.

A voluntary desire to steal or to keep stolen property is of the same malice as the external act, that is, it is mortal or venial, if the object matter is serious or not.

LESSON THIRTY-FIFTH

THE COMMANDMENTS OF THE CHURCH

ON THE FIRST AND SECOND COMMANDMENTS

389. *Q. Which are the chief Commandments of the Church?*

A. The chief Commandments of the Church are six:

1. To hear Mass on Sundays and holydays of obligation.
2. To fast and abstain on the days appointed.
3. To confess at least once a year.
4. To receive the Holy Eucharist during the Easter time.
5. To contribute to the support of our pastors.
6. Not to marry persons who are not Catholics, or who are related to us within the fourth degree of kindred, nor privately without witnesses, not to solemnize marriage at forbidden times.

Before treating of the commandments of the Church in particular we must first prove beyond the shadow of a doubt, that the Church has the legislative authority to make her own laws, and also the judiciary power to apply them. Some heretics deny this, such as Calvin and Luther; others admit the legislative authority of the Church, but dependently on the civil authority; as if that power had been granted to the Church by temporal rulers. If we prove that the Church has legislative power by divine or by her own right, her independence from the civil authority must then be admitted.

I. Christ said to His Apostles: "As the Father hath sent Me, so I send you. Amen I say to you, whatsoever you shall bind upon earth, it shall be bound also in heaven" (Mat. 28:18). The mission of Christ upon earth, certainly included legislative power; the same was handed by Christ to His Church. The power of binding and loosing, sup-

poses a moral tie binding the wills of men either to do or to omit something. Binding is legislating; loosing means to absolve or dispense. Christ Himself understood it so: "I am not come to destroy (*solvere*–loose) the law, but to fulfil" (Mat. 5:17). The foregoing text also proves that the legislative power of the Church is supreme, because its laws are ratified by God Himself. Hence it follows, as Christ said, that he who does not hear the Church, must invariably be looked upon as a heathen and a publican.

II. The Apostles made use of legislative authority. Assembled in council in Jerusalem they made a law, commanding the faithful to "abstain from things sacrificed to idols, from blood, and from things strangled" (Acts 15:29). St. Paul enacted a law that persons twice married should not be ordained (1 Tim. 3).

III. Legislative power belongs by right to every perfectly constituted society. Now, who will deny that Christ made His Church not only a perfect society but the most perfect of all? Therefore the Church has that right of herself, and not by the favor of earthly rulers.

The above arguments apply almost with equal force to the judicial authority of the Church, and in the same order we find:

I. Christ our Lord said: "If thy brother shall offend against thee . . . tell the Church, and if he will not hear the Church, let him be to thee as a heathen and a publican" (Mark 18: 15-17). If the Church could not judge him, what would be the use of summoning him before her tribunal? And without a sentence from a judicial authority, how could he be looked upon as a heathen and a publican?

Christ therefore conferred judiciary authority upon His Church, independently of the civil power.

II. The Apostles made use of that power. Peter passed sentence upon Ananias and Saphira. Paul judged the incestuous Corinthian.

III. The Church, as a perfect society, must have judicial power. What would be the use of legislative power to enact laws, if no means were provided to enforce them. If there is no judicial authority, there could be no unity in the interpretation of the law; passions would cause men continually to dissent. What would be the use in the United States of a splendid Constitution, of a Congress to enact

laws, of a Supreme Executive to approve them, if there were no Supreme Court to interpret them?

The above has always been the teaching of the Church, as also the unanimous doctrine of the Holy Fathers. It is, indeed, a strange sight to behold men, like Calvin and Luther, after having shaken off the Church of Rome, and denied her supreme legislative and judicial power, arbitrarily assume a similar authority themselves, after proclaiming themselves popes of a new creed.

Sound reason must naturally favor the Church, as founded by Christ, endowed with supreme legislative and judicial powers. The Church has then a right to command, and we have in the question under consideration some of her principal commandments. We do not mean that there are only six commandments of the Church; the whole of Canon Law is replete with various commandments of the Church applied or directed to the one or the other class of Christians. The Church may enact different laws for different countries, as circumstances may differ. For the United States the Catechism gives six chief commandments; they are the chief, because they apply to all.

390. *Q. Is it a mortal sin not to hear Mass on a Sunday or on a holyday of obligation?*

A. It is a mortal sin not to hear Mass on a Sunday or a holyday of obligation, unless we are excused for a serious reason. They also commit a mortal sin, who having others under their charge, hinder them from hearing Mass, without a sufficient reason.

The precept of the Church to hear Mass on Sundays and holydays of obligation binds all who are baptized and have attained the use of reason. We are thereby required to hear a whole Mass. He who would, through his own fault, omit the third part of it, would be considered as guilty of a mortal sin. One would not satisfy the precept of hearing Mass, if he were not present at the Consecration and Communion, because the former is the essential and the latter, to say the least, is a very important part of the Mass. It would be a venial sin to omit a minor part of the Mass. One would certainly not satisfy the precept by hearing two half Masses, celebrated by two priests simultaneously.

To hear Mass and satisfy the precept, one must be bodily present. This supposes that he must be morally

united with those who are before the altar, that he may know at least by external signs, by seeing or by hearing, what is being done by the priest, although accidentally he may not hear or see the priest himself. If on account of the crowd, one cannot gain admittance inside the Church he can hear Mass from the outside, as he is part of the crowd assisting at it. To hear Mass one must also be mentally present; for this both intention and attention are required. First, there must be the intention to hear Mass; on this score, one who sleeps during the whole Mass, or is drunk, or is only there to accompany or wait for a friend, does not hear Mass. Secondly, attention of some kind is required; theologians claim that, in order to satisfy the precept, it is sufficient not to do anything which would naturally distract the mind from hearing Mass; we do not mean, however, that this is hearing Mass as we should. Hence those who play the organ, sing or take up a collection, act as ushers, hear Mass. The Catechism says, that it is a mortal sin not to hear Mass, unless we are excused for a serious reason. Serious reasons are: physical or moral impossibility. We will not consider physical impossibility, because there is no ecclesiastical law binding under such circumstances. We understand by moral impossibility a very great inconvenience to our own or to our neighbor's corporal or spiritual welfare. On this ground the following persons would be excused.

1. The sick, and also the convalescent who have reason to believe that going to church and assisting at Holy Mass will prove injurious to them. If this is doubtful, it is best to consult either the doctor or the pastor. As a rule, those who are too unwell or too weak to visit their friends or to go about, are sick enough to be excused from hearing Mass.

2. Those who must guard or watch houses, children or cattle; in like manner, sick nurses, when they cannot well leave their patient. In the event that one in the family, etc., must stay at home, and there is only one Mass, the members should take turns; both husband and wife, master and servant are equally obliged to hear Mass.

3. Wives, children or servants, who without great offense to husbands, parents or masters cannot hear Mass. This happens principally, when the head of the family is a bigoted non-Catholic, and even more especially if he is a fallen-away Catholic.

4. Those who live at a considerable distance from the Church, at least four miles, when they have to walk, or ten miles when they have a conveyance.

5. Women for some weeks before and after childbirth.

6. The frequent excuse of "I had no decent clothes" may be admitted in the case of the very poor; but people should be admonished that the Church is not a place to show off one's fine clothes.

7. Cab-drivers, railroad men and all others who could not attend Mass, without losing their position, are certainly excused; but it would be to their welfare to look for some other employment.

Those who have others under their charge, are obliged under pain of mortal sin to allow them to attend to their Christian duties, unless there be a serious reason, such as would excuse themselves from hearing Mass.

As to those who live far from the Church, and those whose occupations prevent them from assisting at Mass, they should be reminded that it will not do for them to stay away from Mass all their life-time; but that they are bound to make some arrangement whereby they may be able to hear Mass now and then, and receive the Sacraments.

391. *Q. Why were holydays instituted by the Church?*

A. Holydays were instituted by the Church to recall to our minds the great mysteries of religion and the virtues and rewards of the saints.

The holydays are of ecclesiastical institution, and their number differs in various countries. In the United States there are six holydays of obligation, viz.: New Year's day or the feast of the Circumcision of Our Lord; the Ascension of our Lord, the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary, All Saints, the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin and Christmas. We call these the holydays of obligation, because though they may fall on a week day they are to be kept as Sundays. But besides these there are other feasts or holydays which are always celebrated on a Sunday. The object of the holydays is to recall every year to our veneration the memorable events of our holy religion. The Jews had their feasts of Pasch, Pentecost, Tabernacles intended to perpetuate among the people the favors they had received from their special Protector. The Christian Church has her feasts of the Nativity and Ascension of our

Lord, to commemorate the beginning and the accomplishment of man's redemption; the feast of the Circumcision when the Redeemer was given the name of Jesus, in which name all nations were to be saved. The woman, who according to the promise of God to Adam in Paradise, was to crush the head of the infernal serpent, the Virgin of Nazareth, who was to be the Mother of the Redeemer, has, besides numerous festivals in her honor, during the ecclesiastical year, two holydays of obligation consecrated to her, to commemorate the singular privilege of her Immaculate Conception, and the equally singular glory of being taken up in body and soul to heaven, without having to await the day of the general resurrection. A day is set aside every year to commemorate the virtue and glory of all the saints. Besides the above general holydays of obligation, the Church celebrates every day in the year a feast in honor of some one or other of her sainted children. Holydays in the Church are instituted for purposes similar to our civil holidays. Why commemorate Washington's Birthday, why celebrate the Glorious Fourth? If not to remind us of the achievements of great citizens, and of the birth of a great nation and to arouse in the hearts of the citizens of today the spirit of patriotism, love of country and willingness to follow the glorious example of the country's patriots, if the opportunity offered. So must the Feasts of the Church animate us with spiritual patriotism, love of our heavenly home and desire to follow the saints in their glory by imitating upon earth the examples they have set us.

392. *Q. How should we keep the holydays of obligation?*

A. We should keep the holydays of obligation as we should keep the Sundays.

The holydays must be kept like the Sundays, that is, the faithful must on those days abstain from servile work and at least hear Mass. It is undeniable, however, that the keeping of the holydays is much harder on the faithful than the keeping of the Sundays. The Sunday is still a recognized holyday for all; whereas some of our holydays of obligation are not recognized by the civil law, and business proceeds as usual. It takes therefore more good will to properly keep the holydays. Among Catholic business men and general laborers there are cowards; many are afraid of

being known as Catholics, lest it might hurt their business; they are not such as will conquer the kingdom of heaven. Abstaining from servile work and hearing Mass are two distinct commandments; if one cannot be kept, it does not excuse from the observance of the other. Valid reasons of the non-observance of the law will be found in the answers to questions 360 and 390.

393. *Q. What do you mean by fast-days?*
A. By fast-days I mean days on which we are allowed but one full meal.

On fast days we are allowed but one full meal, and even a slice of bread in the morning or its equivalent. The law on fasting is of ecclesiastical institution; the Church therefore has a right to determine its application. Concerning the quantity allowed at the collation, theologians hold with St. Alphonsus, that eight ounces of solid food are allowed, even to those who never take more. If climatic conditions are such as to require a little more, as for instance, in the cold North, nothing would prevent one from taking a little more without breaking the law; if, however, when, for a good reason, the collation is changed into a regular supper, it would no longer mean fasting. General custom has it that on the vigil of Christmas the collation may be doubled. Concerning the quality of the food allowed at the collation, custom allows any Lenten diet, unless the Bishop should have made other restrictions.

The time of the full meal should be towards noon, although the essence of the law would exist, if the time for the full meal and the collation were inverted, but this should not be done except for some good reason. The law of fasting affects only the eating of food, but not the drinking, which does not break the fast, unless it contains much nourishment. Yet it is plain that the purpose of the law being the practice of mortification, temperance in drinking should be added as a matter of choice. Abstinence from all intoxicants is highly recommended, and for many, who cannot fast, is a good substitute. The breaking of the law of fasting is of itself a mortal sin, since it is so declared by the Church, although a little excess could not make it a serious matter. More than one collation taken the same day would certainly break the law. In case the essence of the law should have been broken, and, either purposely or inadvertently,

two full meals have been taken, the law does not oblige any more that day.

Who are bound to keep the fast? All over 21 years and under 60 years of age. Who is exempted from this law? All under 21 and over 60. The sick, the sickly, the convalescent, the weak, mental and corporal hard-working persons; women nursing or about to become mothers, travellers, those who live on alms, or who cannot get their meals at regular hours; and all who cannot fast without injury to their health, or making themselves unfit for their duties. When is fasting obligatory? Every week day in Lent; the ember days; the vigils of Pentecost, of the Assumption, of All Saints and of Christmas. In some dioceses also all the Fridays in Advent. Those who are in doubt whether they are dispensed from fasting should consult their pastor or their confessor.

394. *Q. What do you mean by days of abstinence?*

A. By days of abstinence I mean days on which we are forbidden to eat flesh-meat, but are allowed the usual number of meals.

The law of abstinence forbids under pain of mortal sin the use of flesh-meat and of all that is derived from it, such as soup, etc. In this commandment, as in all others, theologians also admit levity of matter; but according to the most reliable, eating more than half an ounce of flesh-meat would surely be a grievous sin. Sins are multiplied against the commandment of abstinence each different time flesh-meat is eaten. In this it greatly differs from the law of fasting, because the object of the precept still is possible and binding, even after it has been broken. Particulars regarding the law of abstinence are generally published by the Bishops, to whom the Holy See concedes special faculties. The law is to be kept according to the directions promulgated by the Bishops in their respective dioceses.

395. *Q. Why does the Church command us to fast and abstain?*

A. The Church commands us to fast and abstain, in order that we may mortify our passions and satisfy for our sins.

On studying the present condition of man, that is, the condition prevailing since the fall of Adam and Eve, we shall

readily understand the supernatural wisdom of the Church in commanding us to fast and abstain.

Man's fall has lowered him greatly; in him is a strange mixture of greatness and baseness, as our own experience proves. There are two elements in us, continually at war with one another; the one aspiring to all that is good, the other inclined to all that is evil. It is for us to decide which shall win. If we wish the spirit to triumph over the flesh, we must weaken the flesh and strengthen the spirit.

Man again is a culprit. So we are told by all ages and all nations. So we are told by all the expiatory sacrifices that we meet wherever we turn, as well as by the innumerable miseries that overwhelm us. Man is the work of a good God, but he is miserable, because his nature has been corrupted by sin.

Since we are guilty, we are bound to do penance. This is the declaration of reason as well as of faith. Every page of the Old Testament recalls the necessity of doing penance. The Gospel confirms this unchangeable law. How often did not the Saviour of the world say that penance is an indispensable condition of salvation? Did He not say: "Unless ye do penance, ye shall all perish"? (Luke 13:3). Could the Church do otherwise than to claim that the life of a Christian should be a continual penance?

We are Christians, that is other Christs, pledged to follow our Leader whose life on earth from the cradle to the Cross was a continual penance. Therefore, as men, as sinners and as Christians, we are bound to do penance. Our obligation comes both from the natural and from the divine law. How should the general law be applied? How is penance to be done and when, are two questions left to the discretion of the Church. Their solution could not have been left to the private individual, for then there would be nothing but excesses and defects. Too many would shake off the burden entirely, whilst others would go to the other extreme and be guilty of folly and cruelty. Did not the idea of penance among men degenerate in human sacrifices among the pagans? Have not the Middle Ages witnessed the incredible follies of the Flagellants? Christ charged His Church to determine all the particulars regarding the precept of penance. The Church, whilst faithful to her divine mission, determines these particulars in such a manner, that they should not prove too hard to her children. The Church

demands of us a minimum by commanding us to fast and abstain at stated times; and then she is willing to dispense from the law all those for whom her general directions would be too hard. In the ages of greater faith and fervor days of fasting and abstinence were far more numerous and severe than they are now; and probably we are more in need of penance than the first Christians were, and less willing to do it. We must mortify our passions and satisfy for our sins, as well as they; if the Church now demands less, it is that we might make up the deficiency by voluntary acts of mortification and penance. The Church after demanding of us only a minimum in the way of fasting and abstaining, admits of mitigation in special cases, when valid reasons exist.

Sufficient reasons to excuse from the law of fasting have been given in the answer to Qu. 393.

The following are the reasons excusing from the law of abstinence. 1, *Age.* All those who are not subject to the laws of the Church in general, such as children under the age of seven, or those who never had their right mind. 2, *Moral impotence or great inconvenience.* We give the following illustrations of this reason; the reader can apply them to similar cases. 1, The infirm who for sheer necessity or by the advice of a conscientious physician must eat meat; to this class belong also very weak, pregnant, and nursing women, whose infants are weakly, those to whom Lenten diet causes great bodily inconvenience. 2, Poor mendicants who receive meat for an alms. 3, Poor laborers who cannot conveniently have anything else or a sufficiency of Lenten diet. 4, Travellers who cannot procure other food. 5, Guests who unexpectedly find a flesh-meat dinner, and cannot leave without great inconvenience. 6, Soldiers generally who are fed at the expense of the government.

When there is any doubt about the reason being sufficient, we should have recourse to those who have the faculty to dispense.

By special privilege in favor of hard-working men and their families, the former are dispensed from abstinence and *their families* may *eat flesh-meat* at the *principal meal only* on all the Wednesdays in Lent, except Ash-Wednesday and Wednesday in Holy Week, on all the Saturdays of Lent, except Holy Saturday, on all the Wednesdays and Satur-

days of the ember days, and in all vigils of feast, except those of Pentecost and Christmas.

It must be well understood that, when dispensed or excused from the ordinary penances of the Church, we ought to practise some other form of penance, because the Church has no authority to dispense from the general divine law to do penance. Many Catholics who are unable to fast or abstain are accustomed instead to keep from eating between meals, or to abstain from delicacies and the like.

396. *Q. Why does the Church command us to abstain from flesh-meat on Fridays?*

A. The Church commands us to abstain from flesh-meat on Fridays, in honor of the day on which our Saviour died.

It seems quite reasonable, that as the faithful consecrate one day each week to the service of God, they should also set aside one day each week to do some special penance, acting in this on the principle that Christ has taught us the absolute necessity of penance for all adults. We have reasons to believe that the Apostles themselves selected the Friday for this purpose, because on that day the great penance, the great atonement was made by the God-man for our Redemption. Should a Holyday of obligation fall on a Friday, the Church dispenses from the law of abstinence.

LESSON THIRTY-SIXTH

ON THE THIRD, FOURTH, FIFTH AND SIXTH COMMANDMENTS OF THE CHURCH

397. *Q. What is meant by the command of confessing at least once a year?*

A. By the command of confessing at least once a year is meant that we are obliged, under pain of mortal sin, to go to confession within the year.

On studying without prejudice Christian Tradition we cannot but admit that sacramental confession, like all other dogmas of the Church, in its truly dogmatic element, by its nature necessary and unchangeable, has not undergone any change since the beginning. Minor differences, as to discipline, left to be determined by the Church, have occurred according to times and places. The Apostles, if they needed it, and the first Christians confessed their sins in essentially the same manner as we do now. We are bound to confess our mortal sins by two different precepts, the one of divine, the other of ecclesiastical law. It is certain from the divine law: 1st, That if a person has fallen into mortal sin, he is bound to confess when in danger of death. 2nd, That persons who sin mortally, are bound to confess many times during life. 3rd, That a person guilty of mortal sin is bound to confess whenever he is about to receive a Sacrament of the living. In the fervent ages of the Church the faithful did not confine themselves to the letter of this commandment; they often had recourse to the Sacrament of Penance. In the present discipline of the Church, those who do not confess once a year, are declared not to comply with the divine law, and to be guilty of a mortal sin. This applies to all guilty of mortal sin. The time for complying with this law has been determined.

398. *Q. Should we confess only once a year?*

A. We should confess frequently, if we wish to lead a good life.

The Roman Catechism, or, as it is commonly called, the Catechism of the Council of Trent gives us in the following words the advantages of frequent confession. "Nothing can be of greater advantage to the faithful, nothing more capable to inspire them with a desire of penance, than to show them the great benefits to be derived from it. Penance is truly bitter in its root, but sweet in its fruits. First, the Sacrament of Penance restores us to the grace of God, and again unites us with Him in intimate friendship. Secondly, this reconciliation is followed in those who receive it worthily, by great peace and tranquillity of conscience, and uncommon joy of the soul. Finally, there is no sin, however great and abominable, that cannot be repeatedly forgiven by this Sacrament."

We should here recall to mind what we said in the explanation of Qu. 146 about sacramental grace. Confession is not intended merely to forgive actual sins, but also to give to the repentant sinner the special help required to enable him to avoid sin for the future. Hence we should confess frequently, even when not compelled by any special obligation, because it is one of the great means to enable us to lead a good life.

399. *Q. Should children go to confession?*

A. Children should go to confession when they are old enough to commit sin, which is commonly about the age of seven years.

The Roman Catechism has the following on this question: "Whereas Our Lord Himself has unquestionably enacted the law of confession, we must now consider at what age obedience to that law is obligatory. It is plain from the teaching of the Council of Lateran, that nobody is held to the law of confession before he has the use of reason. But whereas it is not easy to determine that time, it seems that the rule should be: that the child is bound by this law, when it is able to distinguish between good and evil, and capable of malice and deceit." For children as for others, capable of committing a mortal sin, there is no other ordinary way of salvation and remission of mortal sin than through the Sacrament of Penance. A child has generally attained the use of reason at the age of seven; and precocious children even sooner. Up to the time of their First Communion they should generally go four times a year; about the ember

days; this of course is a good custom, not a strict law. Parents have a great duty to fulfil in regard to their children at that age. If they have an opportunity of sending them to a Catholic school, the children will be instructed in time for the reception of the Sacrament. But even then parents should see to it, that their children go to confession; and when they have reason to suspect that the children are guilty of any more or less serious offense, they should send them as soon as possible. But if there is no Catholic school, it becomes their personal duty to prepare them, by teaching them what confession is, by reminding them of their principal faults, by exciting them to real sorrow for their sins, and by inducing them to confess everything with much sincerity. It may be a hard duty on Catholic parents, living far away from a church, but it is a duty that should not be overlooked. Frequent confession will prevent children from acquiring sinful habits, and will keep them pure.

400. *Q. What sin does he commit who neglects to receive Communion during the Easter time?*

A. He who neglects to receive Communion during Easter time commits a mortal sin.

For Communion, as well as for confession, there is a divine precept. When treating of the Sacrament of the Holy Eucharist, we showed from the words of the Saviour Himself, that we must sometimes receive Holy Communion, and that we are threatened by Him with eternal damnation, if we culpably neglect it. The early Christians were faithful observers of this precept. They loved their Saviour so tenderly, they felt the need of Him so deeply, that they used to communicate every day. After nineteen centuries we see the great Pontiff Pius X., in order to restore everything in Christ, endeavoring to reinstate this truly Christian practice. In the beginning of the Christian era it was unnecessary to engage the faithful to communicate; there was no indifference then that compelled the Church to use all her authority and threaten the faithful with the severest censures, if they failed to approach the Holy Table. The Council of Lateran, held in the first quarter of the thirteenth century, ordered all Christians, who have attained the age of discretion to communicate at least once a year during the Easter time. Pope Pius X. on August 8th, 1910, decreed that the obligation of the Paschal Communion is

incumbent also on all children who have attained the age of reason or discretion, and that they must be admitted to Holy Communion as soon as they know the principal mysteries of faith and are able to discern the Eucharistic Bread from ordinary or common bread. The above will show how far non-Catholics wander from the truth, when they dare assert that prior to the Fourth Council of Lateran, there was no law for confession and Communion, and that consequently it is a mere ecclesiastical law.

We do not satisfy either the divine or the ecclesiastical precept by a sacrilegious Communion. If one places himself wilfully in the impossibility of receiving Holy Communion, the obligation does not cease thereby and is merely suspended, until he shall be able to receive. He who foresees that he will be prevented from receiving Communion during Easter time, is not obliged to anticipate.

In Catholic countries the Paschal Communion must also be received in one's own parish, unless there be a legitimate excuse, or unless the dispensation be had from the Bishop or pastor; but hitherto this law has not been absolute in the United States, for the reason that there were no regular canonical parishes or pastors. Every one, however, should endeavor to receive in his own parish, that the pastor or rector may know which of his parishioners comply with the law. If Holy Communion cannot be received in the church within the stipulated time on account of sickness, the priest should be informed, and it will be his duty to bring Holy Communion to the sick in their own homes.

401. *Q. What is the Easter time?*

A. The Easter time, is, in this country, the time between the first Sunday of Lent and Trinity Sunday.

By Easter time is generally understood the time between Palm-Sunday and Low-Sunday. The Bishops, however, have the faculty to extend the time in their respective dioceses; all the Bishops in the United States have extended the Easter time from the first Sunday in Lent to Trinity Sunday. They have done so for the reason that in many dioceses the Catholics are scattered over an immense territory, with but a few priests and churches, and that it is impossible for all to receive Holy Communion within so short a time. To the question why the Easter time was selected in preference to any other season of the year to comply with

this law, the answer may be, because this time, for various reasons, seems the most convenient for Catholics all over the world, and also because Easter, or the Resurrection of our Lord, is the great central feast day of the year, and that we cannot better prepare for a spiritual resurrection and a new life, than by the worthy reception of the Sacraments of Penance and Holy Eucharist.

402. *Q. Are we obliged to contribute to the support of our pastors?*

A. We are obliged to contribute to the support of our pastors, and to bear our share in the expenses of the church and school.

The teaching of the Church on this question, may be summed up in the following sentences taken from Scripture: "Have not we power to eat and to drink? Who serveth as a soldier at any time, at his own charges? Who planteth a vineyard and eateth not of the fruit thereof? Who feedeth the flock and eateth not of the milk of the flock? Speak I these things according to man? Or doth not the law also say these things? For it is written in the law of Moses: Thou shalt not muzzle the mouth of the ox, that treadeth out the corn. Doth God take care of oxen? Or doth He say this indeed for our sakes? For these things are written for our sakes: That he that ploweth should plow in hope; and he that thrasheth in hope to receive fruit. If we have sown into you spiritual things, is it a great matter, if we reap your carnal things. . . . Know you not that they who work in the holy place, eat of the things that are of the holy place; and they that serve the altar partake with the altar? So also the Lord ordained that they who preach the Gospel, should live by the Gospel" (1 Cor. 9). "The workman is worthy of his meat" (Mat. 10:10). "And in the same house remain, eating and drinking such things as they have, for the laborer is worthy of his hire" (Luke 10:7). "I have taken from other churches, receiving wages of them for your ministry" (2 Cor. 11:8). "Let the priests, that rule well, be esteemed worthy of double honor, especially those who labor in the word of doctrine, for the Scripture saith: The laborer is worthy of his reward" (1 Tim. 5:17, 18). In these texts we find evident proof that the Church has undoubtedly the right to require the faithful to give what is necessary for

the support of the priests as well as for the keeping up of public worship, in other words, to contribute to the support of their pastors and for all that is needed for the church and school of their parish. In the first centuries the Church did not see any need to enact this by special law, but left it to the faithful to comply with this obligation according to their means and good will. The positive legislation of the Church on this question dates back to about the beginning of the sixth century. Later on a system of tithes was introduced, obliging the faithful to turn over for the needs of the church one-tenth of their income. St. Thomas explains as follows the obligation of paying tithes: "In the Old Testament God gave the law of tithes. This law is partly natural, partly judicial. It is natural, inasmuch as natural reason dictates that the people should give a necessary living to those, who for their welfare, take care of divine worship. It is judicial, in as far as the amount specified is concerned. The natural obligation remains even in the New Law; the judicial prescription has ceased, although it may even now be lawfully and reasonably observed." The obligation of paying tithes has again been introduced by the authority of the Church. The obligation of supporting public worship may be called a natural, divine and ecclesiastical law. In our days in some places tithes are still paid; but for most countries the Church has used her right to abrogate the system of tithes, and introduced in its stead other ways of contributing to the support of the pastors, churches and schools and all other institutions required. In some countries, such as America, there is no fixed ecclesiastical income. It is left to the piety and liberality of the people to contribute according to their means. For the needs of the Church a collection is taken at service on Sundays, pews are rented; or again in other places the funds are provided from monthly or yearly subscriptions. Although there is here no law compelling the faithful to pay tithes, they should not forget that the natural law obliges them to support their pastors, churches and schools. This law cannot be abrogated. Whilst the Church prefers to depend upon the liberality of her children rather than upon an ecclesiastical law, the faithful should not forget that by refusing to do their duty, that they sin not only against religion, but also against justice. Pastors have a right to claim support from their parishioners, because they

minister to their welfare. To make of their contributions an act of religion, the faithful should give with the right intention, that is, for God and for divine worship.

403. *Q. What is the meaning of the Commandment not to marry within the fourth degree of kindred?*

A. The meaning of the Commandment not to marry within the fourth degree of kindred is that no one is allowed to marry another within the fourth degree of blood relationship.

Kindred means relationship in the natural bond existing between persons proceeding by birth from the same common stock. This kind of relationship exists even between the offspring of unlawful wedlock. The common stock is that person, from whom all others descend; as father and mother in the case of children, or grand-father and grand-mother in the case of brother's children. There are two lines of blood relationship, the direct and the collateral. The direct line is when one proceeds from the other as great grand-father, grand-father, father, son, grandson, great grandson, etc. The collateral line is when they proceed from a common stock, but not one from the other, as uncles, grand-uncles, nephews, grand-nephews, etc. Degree is the distance those related are from the common stock; so brother and sister are in the first degree; first cousins in the second, second cousins in third, etc. Sometimes there is double relationship, as in the case of the offspring of two brothers having married two sisters; or one person having successively married two sisters. In the straight or direct line, blood relationship nullifies marriage indefinitely. In the collateral line it nullifies it up to the fourth degree inclusive. This is an ecclesiastical law, and therefore does not apply to heathens. If two second cousins are legally married before they are baptized, the Church would consider their marriage valid.

Affinity or relationship by marriage is the relation of persons caused by lawful wedlock. By this the blood relations of the one become relations by marriage of the other in the same line and degree as the relationship by blood. Affinity may be multiplied exactly like consanguinity; a person may be related to the same person in different ways. Most likely affinity resulting from a lawful marriage nullifies marriage only in the first degree, and then only by posi-

tive law; the marriage therefore of a man with his deceased wife's sister is not against the laws of nature. An impediment like that contracted in paganism by lawful wedlock or sin, would be no nullifying impediment after their conversion, because prior to that the positive law of the Church did not apply to them. Affinity in the collateral line nullifies marriage up to the fourth degree only, if it results from fornication. The Church can dispense in all impediments created by positive law. In cases of affinity it is easier to obtain a dispensation than in cases of blood relationship; the latter cases, especially near relationship, are, at any event, even when contracted with dispensation, a physical mistake.

404. *Q. What is the meaning of the command not to marry privately?*

A. The command not to marry privately means that none should marry without the blessing of God's priests or without witnesses.

The Council of Trent made prudent provision against the rash celebration of clandestine marriages, which the Church of God for most just reasons has always detested and forbidden. It required that marriages should be performed before the parish priest and at least two witnesses; but this decree did not apply except to places where it had been duly promulgated; up to this day in a great many places it has never been promulgated. This led to serious doubts and inconveniences. Even in places where the decree had been promulgated, all difficulty had not been removed. Deplorable results were of more frequent occurrence in our days on account of the increased facility and celerity of intercommunication. At the request of Bishops all over the world, Pope Pius X., after mature deliberation issued a decree on the 2nd day of August 1907, by which he considerably changed the existing discipline regarding marriage and regulated its celebration for the future as follows:

I. Only those marriages are valid which are contracted before the parish priest or the ordinary of the place or a priest delegated by either of these, and at least two witnesses according to the rules laid down in the following articles, and saving the exceptions mentioned under V and VI.

II. The pastor and the ordinary of the place assist validly at a marriage:

1. Only within the limits of their territory; within which they assist validly at the marriage not only of their own subjects, but also of those not subject to them.

2. Provided when invited and asked, and not compelled by violence or by grave fear, they demand and receive the consent of the contracting parties.

III. They assist licitly:

1. When they have legitimately ascertained the free state of the contracting parties; 2, When they have ascertained that one of the contracting parties has a domicile or at least has lived for a month in the place where the marriage takes place. 3, If this condition is lacking, they require the permission of the pastor or the ordinary of one of the contracting parties, unless it be a case of grave necessity, which excuses from this permission. 4, Concerning persons without fixed abode, the pastor cannot assist without the consent of his ordinary, unless it be a case of necessity. 5, As a rule, the marriage should be celebrated before the pastor of the bride, unless some just cause excuses from this.

IV. Pastors and ordinaries may grant permission to another priest, specified and certain, to assist at marriages within their jurisdiction. The delegated priest, to assist validly or licitly, is bound to observe the limits of his mandate, and the rules laid down above for the pastor and the ordinary.

V. When danger of death is imminent, and where the pastor, the ordinary, or their delegate cannot be had, a marriage may validly and licitly be contracted before any priest and two witnesses.

VI. Should it happen that in any district the pastor or the ordinary of a place or a priest delegated by either of them, before whom marriage can be celebrated, is not to be had, and that this condition of things has lasted for a month, marriage may be validly and licitly entered upon by the formal declaration made by the spouses in the presence of two witnesses.

VII. When a marriage is contracted in the manner described in V and VI, the priest in the former and the witnesses in the latter are bound conjointly with the contracting parties to provide that the marriage be inscribed as soon as possible in the prescribed books.

VIII. The above laws are binding on all persons baptized in the Catholic Church, and on those who have been converted to it from heresy or schism (even if they should fall away again), whenever they contract marriage with one another. The same laws apply to Catholics as above, if they contract marriage with non-Catholics baptized or unbaptized, even after a dispensation of mixed religion or disparity of cult has been granted. Non-Catholics, whether baptized or unbaptized, who contract among themselves are nowhere bound to observe the Catholic form of marriage.

IX. In the above various articles by pastor must be understood not only a priest legitimately presiding over a parish canonically erected, but in regions where parishes are not canonically erected (as in the United States), the priest to whom the care of souls has been legitimately entrusted in any specified district, and who is equivalent to a pastor; and in missions where the territory has not yet been perfectly divided, every priest generally deputed by the superior of the mission for the care of souls in any station.

X. The above regulations have the force of law since Easter Sunday, April 19th, 1908.

405. *Q. What is the meaning of the precept not to solemnize marriage at forbidden times?*

A. The meaning of the precept not to solemnize marriage at forbidden times is that during Lent and Advent the marriage ceremony should not be performed with pomp or a Nuptial Mass.

By the law of the universal Church, confirmed again by the Council of Trent, the solemnity of a wedding, not the marriage itself, is forbidden from the first Sunday of Advent to the feast of Epiphany inclusive, and from Ash-Wednesday to the Octave of Easter inclusive. By the solemnity of marriage is understood the solemn Nuptial blessing given at a special Mass for bride and bridegroom; the Bishop even cannot give permission for that. The feasting which generally accompanies weddings is also against the spirit of the law. Nothing prevents, however, that a marriage be contracted with the above restriction; unless the special law of a country or diocese forbids the celebration of marriage; in this case the Bishop's permission must be had.

406. *Q. What is the Nuptial Mass?*

A. The Nuptial Mass is a Mass appointed by the Church to invoke a special blessing upon the married couple.

The Nuptial Mass is a votive Mass in the Missal inscribed "*Pro Sponso et Sponsa*," That is, "For Bridegroom and Bride." All the special parts of this Mass, besides the Ordinary of the Mass, which is practically the same in all Masses, has reference to marriage; the prayers are all directly intended for the bridegroom and bride. In this Mass the solemn Nuptial blessing is given; it is a part of the Mass. After the *Pater*, the priest, turning towards the married pair, pronounces an admirable prayer, in which he invokes on them all the divine blessings formerly bestowed on the alliances of the patriarchs. This most powerful prayer will infallibly produce its effect, if the parties, in whose favor it is uttered, place no obstacle thereto. After the Communion of the priest, the married pair receive Holy Communion. Before the last blessing, the priest turns towards them once again, and reiterates the wishes and blessings for a happy wedded life.

407. *Q. Should Catholics be married at a Nuptial Mass?*

A. Catholics should be married at a Nuptial Mass, because they thereby show greater reverence for the holy Sacrament and bring richer blessings upon their wedded life.

Marriage, says St. Paul, is honorable in all things; it is the sign of the union of Christ with His Church. Catholics owe it to themselves and to their non-Catholic friends to show the greatest regard for the *great* Sacrament. The need of this is probably greater now than at any other period in the existence of the Church, for at no time has greater disregard for the sacredness of that state been shown than at present, so that even the natural law is ignored. The basis of Christian society is the Christian home, and the basis of the Christian home is Christian marriage, that is, marriage entered into according to the laws and wishes of the Church, and cemented by God's blessing, as the Fathers of the Third Plenary Council of Baltimore express it. Good

example demands that Catholics should show reverence for this holy Sacrament, by celebrating it as an act of religion at a Nuptial Mass. Moreover, Catholics should not forget that marriage places weighty responsibilities on them; the burden would prove too heavy for them without the aid and assistance of God. God grants the blessings which will make the burden light, but on condition that it be celebrated according to the directions of the Church. How can those, who wilfully forego the privilege of being married at a Nuptial Mass, and for a futile reason wish to be married in the afternoon, at night, or at home, how can they, we ask, expect to succeed in such an important undertaking?

LESSON THIRTY-SEVENTH

ON THE LAST JUDGMENT AND THE RESURRECTION, HELL, PURGATORY, AND HEAVEN

408. *Q. When will Christ judge us?*

A. Christ will judge us immediately after our death, and on the last day.

That Christ will judge us at the end of the world on the last day is an article of faith clearly expressed in all symbols of faith. Holy Scripture plainly teaches it, as is evident from the following texts. "The Son of man shall come in the glory of His Father with His angels, and then will He render to every man according to his works" (Mat. 16:27). "For we must all be manifested before the judgment-seat of Christ, that every one may receive the proper things of the body, according as he hath done, whether it be good or evil" (2 Cor. 5:10). "And all nations shall be gathered together before Him, and He shall separate them one from another, as the shepherd separateth the sheep from the goats" (Mat. 25:32). "We shall all stand before the judgment-seat of Christ" (Rom. 14:10).

That Christ will judge us immediately after our death, although not expressed in Holy Scripture in so many words, is shown to be the fact in various ways. In the parable of Lazarus and Dives we read, that both died, and that Lazarus was taken into Abraham's bosom, whilst the other was buried in hell. There is no question here of things to happen on the last day, which is clear from the fact that Dives is already buried in hell, while his five brothers are still upon earth (Luke 16:19).

Ecclesiasticus (11:27-29) warns us as follows: "In the way of evils be not unmindful of good things; for it is easy before God in the day of death to reward every one according to his ways . . . and in the end of a man is the disclosing of his works." Therefore on the day of death shall be allotted to every one the retribution of his works, after the disclosing of them. According to St. Paul, to be

in the body is to be absent from the Lord; it is to walk by faith and not by sight; to be present with the Lord and see Him in the beatific vision before the day of the last judgment, one must be absent from the body; in other words, he must die (2 Cor. 5:6, 7). Here St. Paul teaches that as long as we are in this mortal life we cannot see God in the beatific vision, and yet, on the other hand, that we can be with God and see Him before the end of the world comes. Therefore heaven must be awarded in the judgment which immediately follows death. The teaching of the Church and Christian Tradition are constant proofs of a judgment immediately following death.

St. Thomas gives the following logical explanation of this: "Each man is an individual person, and he is also a part of all mankind; therefore a twofold judgment is due him; a particular judgment after death, when he will receive according to what he has done in the flesh, although not in full, because only the soul, not the body, will then be rewarded or punished. He must undergo another judgment, inasmuch as he is a part of all mankind. God will not judge twice the same, because He will not inflict two punishments for the same sin, but the punishment, which was partially inflicted before the last judgment, will be completed by it, when the impious will be tormented in the body as well as in the soul." "Besides," says St. Thomas, "there is no reason why in the punishment or the reward of the soul, the reunion of body and soul should be awaited, but, on the contrary, it appears more reasonable that the soul, in which first there was guilt or merit, should be first punished or rewarded."

409. *Q. What is the judgment called which we have to undergo immediately after death?*

A. The judgment we have to undergo immediately after death is called the Particular Judgment.

Particular judgment consists herein, that when death puts an end to the time of merit or demerit, eternal retribution should immediately follow. We must not take a too human view of this judgment, as if it meant an inquisition about things uncertain, and that sentence is passed according to the knowledge of facts only then brought to light. Christ, to whom the Father has given all judgment, needs no information from any one, nor to make any investigation, because

He is the all-wise God. Some writers explain how, to have sentence passed upon them, the souls are taken up to heaven, or Christ comes down to them. Neither supposition is correct. In the first place, the souls of those to be sentenced to hell, shall not enter heaven; there is no reason why they should be taken up to heaven to be cast out immediately afterwards. On the other hand, it does not seem probable that Christ should be on the move continually from one death-bed to another. All is sufficiently explained, if we admit that the soul receives a special light in her intellect to understand her good and evil deeds, and to receive the just sentence of the judge.

The souls therefore appear before the judgment-seat of Christ not locally but intellectually; it is a judgment not of enquiry, but of retribution. When we read the holy Fathers, or hear preachers making of particular judgment a human tribunal, with the judge, the accused, the witnesses, that is, the guardian angel and the devil, it is a vivid description of something which is hard to bring home otherwise, although it is not the correct view. The judgment is particular in the sense that it is between Christ and the soul, as opposed to the general judgment.

410. *Q. What is the judgment called which all men have to undergo on the last day?*

A. The judgment which all men have to undergo on the last day is called the General Judgment.

In answer to question 408 we have proved that, besides a particular judgment after death, there will be a general judgment on the last day. About the general judgment the following points are necessary and useful to know, and will, at the same time, explain why it is called general judgment:

1. The judge will be Jesus Christ according to His human nature. "The Father hath given Him power to do judgment, because He is the Son of man" (John 5:27). "Christ was appointed by God to be judge of the living and of the dead" (Acts 8:42). "We must all be manifested before the judgment seat of Christ" (2 Cor. 5:10).

Christ will come to judge in His glorified body with *great* glory. "The Son of man shall come in the glory of His Father with His angels" (Mat. 16:27). "They shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with much power and majesty" (Mat. 24:30).

The sign of the Cross shall be carried before the Judge, as His own standard. "Then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven" (Ibid.). Some saints shall judge with Christ, because He said to His Apostles: "You also shall sit on twelve seats judging the twelve tribes of Israel" (Mat. 19:12).

2. All men shall be judged. "All nations shall be gathered together before Him."

3. The object of the judgment will be all the moral acts, either good or bad, of all men. "All things that are done God will bring into judgment for every error, whether it be good or evil" (Eccles. 12:14).

4. The place of the last judgment will probably be the valley of Josaphat, which is near the mount of Olives: "I will gather together all nations, and will bring them down the valley of Josaphat" (Joel 3:2).

411. *Q. Why does Christ judge men immediately after death?*

A. Christ judges men immediately after death to reward or punish them according to their deeds.

Formerly it was allowable to doubt and discuss about the fate of the soul after death, but all occasion for doubt has been taken away by the definitions of sovereign Pontiffs and Ecumenical Councils.

Some even among modern writers held it possible that a man dying with the guilt of a mortal sin, could be saved; they thought that he might have an opportunity in the other world to acquire sanctifying grace, before final sentence would be passed. This opinion is opposed to Catholic teaching; with one's last breath the time for merit or demerit expires; man is no longer able to gain or to lose. The soul continues to exist, because it is immortal; as soon as it is freed from the body, it begins a new life, either of joy or grief, as the particular judgment will determine.

412. *Q. What are the rewards or punishments appointed for men's souls after the Particular Judgment?*

A. The rewards or punishments appointed for men's souls after the Particular Judgment are Heaven, Purgatory, and Hell.

The souls freed from the body, immediately after the par-

ticular judgment, on account of their merits or demerits, are sent either to hell, to heaven, or for a time to purgatory until after perfect purification they are admitted into heaven. "The receptacles of the souls," says St. Thomas, "are distinguished according to their different states. The soul united to the mortal body is in the state of meriting, but, freed from it, it is in the state of receiving good or evil according to its merits. After death, then, the soul is in the state to receive its final reward or it is not. If in the state to receive final retribution, this can be in two ways: Either final reward for good, and so we have *Heaven*, or final retribution for evil, and this may be either actual sin and we have *Hell*, or original sin, and we have the *Limbo* of the children. If after death the soul is prevented from receiving final retribution, it is either on account of a defect of the person and so we have *Purgatory*, wherein the souls are detained until that defect shall have disappeared; or on account of a defect of nature, and so there was the Limbo of the Fathers, wherein the saints were detained on account of the guilt of the human race, which could not be expiated but by the Redeemer to come. It ceased to exist with the Ascension of Christ."

We will now prove the existence of these receptacles of the souls after death.

Heaven. The existence of heaven is so deeply engraved in the hearts and minds of all men, that no testimony from Revelation is required to prove it. It has never been denied. The very idea of a Creator implies the idea of reward.

Hell. The Sadducees of old denied the existence of hell; many Protestant rationalists have so contorted Scriptural passages as to considerably mitigate the horrors of hell, and even to deny its existence. All materialists, who reject the immortality of the soul, consequently deny the existence of hell.

Against all these the Catholic teaching is that there is a hell, into which the wicked are cast immediately after death.

I. Hell is called in Holy Scripture "a furnace of fire" (Mat. 13:42); "everlasting punishment" (25:46), "a place of torments" (Luke 16:28); "A pool burning with fire and brimstone which is the second death" (Apoc. 21:8); Christ will say at the last judgment: "Depart from Me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, which was prepared

for the devil and his angels" (Mat. 25:41). Christ warns us to lose rather everything in this world, than expose ourselves to the danger of losing everything in hell.

II. The dogma of the existence of hell has been explicitly handed down from the very beginning of the Church. This is so manifest, that it is not necessary to bring proofs.

III. Abstraction made of Revelation and Tradition, reason itself proves the existence of hell, as follows: God's justice and holiness necessarily demand a sufficient sanction of His law. Now, in this life there is no sufficient sanction, as is evident; therefore there must be in the other world a perfect sanction by a perfect retribution according to each one's works, or, in other words, there must be a hell. That is the argument of St. John Chrysostom and others. "God is just," he writes, "as we all agree, Jew and Gentile, heretic and Christian. But there are many, who have sinned and departed from here with impunity; there are many who lived a virtuous life and die after having undergone a thousand tribulations. Therefore, if God is just, how can He reward or punish, if there is no hell, no resurrection?"

Purgatory. The existence of purgatory is one of the bones of contention between Catholics and Protestants. The Catholic admits it as a dogma of faith, the Protestant rejects it, as a logical consequence of his system of justification, which we have proved to be absurd. We will prove the existence of purgatory 1st, from Scripture, 2nd from Tradition, 3rd from reason.

I. *From Scripture.* In the second book of Machabees (12:43) we read, that Judas Machabee, making a gathering, "sent twelve thousand drachms of silver to Jerusalem for sacrifice to be offered for the sins of the dead, thinking well and religiously of the resurrection. For if he had not hoped that they that were slain should rise again, it would have seemed superfluous and vain to pray for the dead. And because he considered that they who had fallen alseep with godliness, had great grace laid up before them. It is therefore a holy and wholesome thought to pray for the dead, that they may be loosed from their sins." The above text can apply only to the Catholic belief of Purgatory. True, Protestants reject the books of the Machabees, as noncanonical. Catholic writers prove that they are just as truly inspired as any other part of Scripture. But, supposing even for the sake of argument that they are not, they never-

theless give us a splendid historical proof of the faith of the Jews in the existence of purgatory.

Christ said: "He that shall speak against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him either in this world, or in the world to come" (Mat. 12:32). From these words we conclude that some sins may be forgiven in the world to come, and consequently that there is a purgatory, or a middle-place between heaven, wherein nothing defiled shall enter, and hell, whence there is no redemption.

II. *From Tradition.* That the dogma of the existence of purgatory has been continuously believed and taught in the Church, is clearly proved from the Councils, from the Fathers, both Greek and Latin, from the universal practice of praying for the dead, from the consent even of the Greek schismatics.

III. *From reason.* It is certain that nothing defiled shall enter heaven. It is equally certain that none will eternally be lost except for a mortal sin. Now who will deny that many leave this world, who are neither good enough for heaven, nor bad enough for hell. Where shall they go, if not to purgatory?

Besides the above three places, there must be another abode for children, and for all those who never committed an actual sin and were not baptized. They are excluded from heaven, because "Unless a man be born again of water and the Holy Ghost, he cannot enter the kingdom of God" (John 3:5). They are not in hell, because they have no actual sin. Purgatory will cease to exist, and besides the souls in purgatory are all on the way to heaven. Therefore there must be a Limbo for the unbaptized children.

413. *Q. What is Hell?*

A. Hell is a state to which the wicked are condemned, and in which they are deprived of the sight of God for all eternity, and are in dreadful torments.

I. This is clear from the testimony of Holy Scripture: "Depart from Me, you cursed, into everlasting fire" (Mat. 25:41). And for fear that its words might be misunderstood, as if the fire of hell only, not the torments of the damned were eternal, Scripture adds: "And these shall go into everlasting punishment." St. Paul says (2 Thess. 1:9), that they shall suffer eternal punishment in destruction. This eternity of pains must not be understood as meaning

pains of a very long duration, but pains that shall never end; as is clear from the word used: "The fire shall not be extinguished, their worm shall never die" (Mark 9:43, 47). The punishment of the damned shall be eternal in the same sense as the reward of the blessed shall be eternal.

That is why the damned are called: "*cursed, vessels of wrath*" (Rom. 9:22 — John 3:36), over whom remains the wrath of God. Christian writers are unanimous in proclaiming eternal the pains of hell.

II. All those who die in the state of mortal sin are condemned to hell; we have proved this in the foregoing question.

III. About the nature of the pains of hell, we know that there is a *pain of loss* and a *pain of the senses*, both clearly expressed in the words of the Judge: "Depart from Me (pain of loss) into everlasting fire" (pain of the senses). 1, The former consists in the privation of eternal happiness, and of all that is combined with the enjoyment of the Supreme Good in heaven. This punishment is a connatural consequence of mortal sin; by sin man leaves or turns away from God, and it is but natural that he, who turns his back upon Him unto the end, should be deserted by God in return. This punishment is the greatest of all; it means the irreparable loss of all that is good; it brings about eternal despair. 2, The latter is called pain of the senses, not because it is necessarily in the sensitive part of the damned only; for in that case the demons and the souls before the day of the resurrection would not suffer it, as they have no corporeal sensation, but because it is to them the greatest physical evil, which on earth would be the object of the senses. It consists in the positive infliction of all that constitutes the greatest physical punishment. It would be too long to describe this most terrible of sufferings, the various horrors and torments of hell, the company of the demons and the damned. The chief torment of the senses, however, seems to be fire. According to the best authorities the fire of hell seems to be a real corporeal fire, enkindled by God's wrath, to burn both body and soul.

IV. Disparity of pains. It is evident that, as in heaven there is a difference in the rewards, and that there are many mansions in the house of the heavenly Father, so there are in hell also various degrees of punishment. Reason tells us that the punishment should be proportionate to the of-

fense; now the offenses or sins of the damned vary in number and gravity; therefore there must be variety or inequality in their pains. Even the pain of loss will cause more intense despair in some than in others.

414. *Q. What is Purgatory?*

A. Purgatory is the state in which those suffer for a time who die guilty of venial sins, or without having satisfied for the punishment due to their sins.

In regard to purgatory there are only two points which faith commands us to believe. 1st, That there is a purgatory, and 2nd, that the souls detained therein can be helped by the suffrages of the faithful, and especially by the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. The following questions, although not of faith, nor decided by the Church, are discussed by theologians, and will enable us better to understand the state of the souls, who at death had not fully atoned for their past shortcomings.

I. *The pains of purgatory.* There is a twofold pain in purgatory, the pain of loss and the pain of the senses. The first consists in a temporary privation of the beatific vision and of all the blessings connected with it. How great this pain must be, may be gathered from the following considerations: 1, They know the infinite perfections of God and desire to see Him most ardently; yet they cannot. 2, They know that it is their own fault. 3, They realize that it would have been so easy for them to have been purified during their life of all their faults, and to have atoned for all their shortcomings, 4th, and that they neglected through their carelessness and sloth to lay up treasures of eternal merits and acquire a higher degree of glory.

That there is in purgatory besides the pain of loss also the pain of the senses has never been defined by the Church, but it is the common sentiment of Christians. In all probability there is a real and corporeal fire to purify the souls. As to the intensity of the pains in purgatory, nothing is known with certainty. According to St. Thomas, the least pain of purgatory exceeds the greatest suffering of this life.

II. *The state of the souls in purgatory.* The souls in purgatory are impeccable and certain of their salvation. This much is certain, as the opposite doctrine, held by Luther, was condemned by Leo X.

III. The duration of purgatory will, according to the perpetual belief of the Church, not extend beyond the day of the general judgment. This is certain. But how long a time each individual soul may have to remain in it, is entirely uncertain. The practice of the Church is to permit that Mass be offered for the souls of the dead, without limitation of time.

IV. Purgatory most probably is a determined corporeal subterraneous place in the vicinity of hell. This is, according to St. Thomas, the ordinary place; but by divine dispensation there may be another, as we read that certain souls have undergone elsewhere their purgatorial punishment.

415. *Q. Can the faithful on earth help the souls in Purgatory?*

A. The faithful on earth can help the souls in Purgatory by their prayers, fasts, almsdeeds, by indulgences, and by having Masses said for them.

It is a dogma of faith, proclaimed by the Council of Trent, "that the souls detained in purgatory are helped by the suffrages of the faithful, and especially by the acceptable sacrifice of the Altar." It is hardly necessary to defend that dogma by special arguments, as most of the arguments, which prove the existence of purgatory also demonstrate this doctrine, as for instance, 2 Machabees 13:43 and following. St. Ambrose in the funeral sermon of his brother said: "To thee, Almighty God, do I recommend his pure soul; to Thee I bring my offering. In Thy mercy receive this fraternal present, the sacrifice of a priest." By suffrages for the souls in purgatory we understand all the good works, which the living offer to God for the dead, that they may be released from their sufferings. The Catholic doctrine on this question flows directly from an article of the Apostles' Creed — *the communion of saints.*

In addition to what the Church teaches in regard to the intercommunion of the faithful on earth and the souls in purgatory, the following points are to some extent necessary, or at least useful to know.

1. The most efficacious means to help the faithful departed is the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. Indulgences are also a powerful means, and likewise all other good works, especially, alms-deeds, works of penance, such as fasting, and prayer. 2, These good works help the souls infallibly.

3, They help especially the souls for whom they are offered; this seems clear from the practice of the Church.

416. *Q. If every one is judged immediately after death, what need is there of a general judgment?*

A. There is need of a general judgment, though every one is judged immediately after death, that the providence of God, which, on earth, often permits the good to suffer and the wicked to prosper, may in the end appear just before all men.

There is a threefold reason why in addition to the particular judgment, which settles each one's destiny for all eternity, there should be a general judgment. 1, On the part of God, in order that the ways of divine goodness, wisdom and justice, which in this life are often hidden from us, may be made plain to all men, and be recognized by them. The whole world must render homage to the wisdom of His counsels, to the sweetness of His ways and to the deep economy of His designs. It is necessary that all things should return to that order, which sin disturbed; a general judgment is the only means of publicly repairing the order publicly violated. 2, A general judgment is necessary on the part of Christ, in order that He may be exalted before the whole world, and that as He "emptied Himself" for the good of all, He may now receive the homage of all, and celebrate His triumph over all His enemies. He was on earth disowned by the Jews, crucified by pagans, blasphemed by heretics, insulted by infidels, and above all dishonored by bad Christians; a solemn act of reparation must be made by all. 3, A general judgment is necessary on the part of all men, in order that the good and the evil works of each, which often remained hidden from men in this life, may be manifested, and that the retribution of God may appear just to all. The saint is now treated as His divine Master, despised, persecuted, mocked; the sinner crowned with glory, intoxicated with pleasures, insolently scorns the laws of God; these roles must be reversed; each one shall have his proper place on the last day. A man by his good works may save thousands; while, on the other hand, another by his evil deeds may cause the fall of thousands; it is but right that St. Paul and Luther should be manifested in their works and their results. Rulers of nations should be judged, not merely as individuals, but in

public for the good and evil they have done in their official capacity.

417. *Q. Will our bodies share in the reward or punishment of our souls?*

A. Our bodies will share in the reward or punishment of our souls, because through the resurrection they will again be united to them.

This question treats of the eleventh article of the Creed, the resurrection of the body. By resurrection we understand a substantial change, through which that which existed and was corrupted, comes again into existence. Resurrection does not mean a creation out of nothing; for it produces the same body again, otherwise it would not be the same man. We call it the resurrection of the flesh or of the body, not of man, because it is only the body, which died and was decomposed, that can be raised to life again; the soul, being immortal, did not die, therefore it cannot rise again. At all times in the history of Christianity some have denied the resurrection of the body, even in the days of the Apostles, as we gather from St. Paul: "How do some of you say that there is no resurrection of the body?" (1 Cor. 15: 12).

The resurrection of the body is one of the fundamental dogmas of the Christian religion, which we proclaim on various occasions. To have us understand of what importance is our faith in a future resurrection, St. Paul declares: "If there is no resurrection of the dead, then Christ is not risen again, and if Christ be not risen again, then is our preaching vain and your faith is also vain" (1 Cor. 15: 13-14).

I. Scripture furnishes us abundant proofs of the truth of this dogma. Christ on several occasions taught it openly and in plain words, as when He said: "The hour cometh, wherein all that are in the graves, shall hear the voice of the Son of God. And they that have done good things, shall come forth unto the resurrection of life, but they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of judgment" (John 5:28). Christ defended this doctrine against the Sadducees. St. Paul, both in his preaching and in his epistles, frequently inculcates the same doctrine, especially in his first Epistle to the Corinthians (15: 12-28) in which he vindicates the resurrection of the body against opponents, and proves it with

the most solid arguments. Of the numerous testimonies of the Old Testament, we quote only one: "Who will grant me," says holy Job, (19: 23-27) "that my words may be written? Who will grant me that they may be marked down in a book? With an iron pen and in a plate of lead, or else be graven with an instrument in flint-stone? For I know that my Redeemer liveth, and in the last day I shall rise out of the earth. And I shall be clothed again with my skin and *in my flesh* I shall see my God, whom *I myself* shall see and my eyes shall behold, *and not another.* This my hope is laid up in my bosom."

II. Reason, unaided by Revelation, suggests the resurrection of the body, not that it can prove it, but at least shows that it is befitting. 1, "The souls of men are immortal; they live therefore after their parting from the body. It is clear, however, that the soul is naturally united with the body, the soul is essentially the form, the life of the body. It is therefore unnatural for the soul to be without the body. What is unnatural cannot be perpetual. Therefore the soul shall not be forever without the body. Now since the soul will exist forever, it should then be reunited with the body, but this requires that the body should rise again. The immortality of the soul, therefore, seems to demand the future resurrection of the body." This is the argument of St. Thomas. 2, Man naturally desires perfect happiness; but there can be no perfect happiness for man as such, unless it satisfies both his body and soul, for he is not a pure spirit; and, as there neither is nor can be perfect happiness in this life, but only in the next, it follows that man's body and soul should be reunited in the next life. 3, Divine Providence punishes the wicked and rewards the good, but in this life man's body and soul act together, and concur in doing good and in doing evil. In this life neither due punishment or due reward is given. We must then suppose a reunion of body and soul in the next life, so that man may be appropriately rewarded or punished in his body and soul.

We further believe that the risen bodies will be identically the same, that each man had in this life; and each body will be reunited to its own soul. This must not, however, be understood to mean that the body will contain all the matter that ever belonged to it, because in that case, we should be all monsters. This is not even the case during life, when the body undergoes changes by assimilation and rejection,

The identity of the body, however, offers some great difficulties even to the best theologians. Children shall be developed into perfect manhood; decrepit old age shall be unknown.

418. *Q. In what state will the bodies of the just rise?* A. The bodies of the just will rise glorious and immortal.

Immortality of the body after its glorious resurrection has been sufficiently proved in the preceding questions; we give here the qualities of a glorified body. The bodies of the just will be most beautiful, whilst the bodies of the damned will be most hideous. The bodies of the just, in addition to their natural perfections, will have wonderful supernatural qualities, in which they will resemble, to a certain extent the glorified body of Christ. Four qualities are generally attributed to them, viz.: impassibility, splendor, agility and subtlety, according to these words of the apostle: "It is sown in corruption, it shall rise in incorruption (impassibility); it is sown in dishonor, it shall rise in glory (splendor); it is sown in weakness, it shall rise in power (agility); it is sown a natural body, it shall rise a spiritual body" (subtlety) (1 Cor. 15:42).

1. *Impassibility* is that faculty which excludes all corruption, all sorrow and inconvenience: "Death shall be no more, nor mourning, nor crying, nor sorrow shall be any more, for the former things are passed away" (Apoc. 21:4).

2. *Splendor* consists herein that the "just shall shine as the sun in the kingdom of their Father" (Mat. 13:43); an example of which we have in the glorious transfiguration of Christ. This splendor, says St. Thomas, will be caused by the reflection of the glory of the soul on the body.

3. *Agility* is that quality, by which the body, without difficulty or obstacle, can move with lightning-speed wherever the soul pleases. We find an illustration of this in the history of Christ, who after His resurrection, appeared and disappeared instantaneously. The soul is united to the body, says St. Thomas, not only as its form, but also as its motive power; perfect subjection to the soul in the other world will cause it to share this quality of the soul.

4. *Subtlety* or spirituality, consists in this that the body will be perfectly subject to the soul, and will always be ready for its commands. The material animal body now will be

the glorified spiritual body then. St. Gregory says that Christ gave His body to touch, after entering a room the doors being closed, to show that His body after the Resurrection was of the same nature, but of different glory.

419. *Q. Will the bodies of the damned also rise?*

A. The bodies of the damned will also rise, but they will be condemned to eternal punishment.

The bodies of the damned will rise again on the last day, and will have all that constitutes a body, as otherwise there would be no true resurrection of the body. The eleventh article of the creed applies as we have seen (Qu. 417) to the bodies of the damned as well as to the bodies of the just. Most probably the bodies of the damned will rise with all their members, organs and faculties, and will have qualities opposed to those of the bodies of the just. Their bodies will indeed, be immortal like their soul, and as a lost soul is horrid beyond description, so must its body, which is to share in its eternal punishment, be inconceivably hideous.

420. *Q. What is Heaven?*

A. Heaven is the state of everlasting life in which we see God face to face, are made like unto Him in glory, and enjoy eternal happiness.

With regard to heaven, the state of the blessed, or the place where God manifests Himself face to face to the blessed, who enjoy their perfect happiness, faith teaches these four points, viz.: 1, The just see God in heaven by intuition, and by that vision they are made happy. 2, That vision is not equal in all, but is more or less perfect according to the merits of each. 3, Since the Ascension of our Lord the souls of the dead, which are perfectly purified, are admitted immediately to the beatific vision. 4, Celestial happiness is eternal. The last point is the one which we profess in the Apostles' Creed by *everlasting life*. Hell is eternal death; heaven is eternal life. Heavenly happiness may be described as the supreme good, which absolutely satisfies all our cravings. Happiness may be divided into essential and accidental happiness. The first is the one which, without the addition of anything else, makes man happy; the second is an accessory complement of the first.

I. Essential happiness in heaven consists in the intuitive vision of God with corresponding love and enjoyment. That the supreme happiness of the blessed will consist in the intuitive vision of God is clearly demonstrated in Holy Scripture. It teaches not only that the just shall see God, but places also in the beatific vision their entire similitude with God, consequently their highest perfection, their greatest happiness. "We are now the sons of God; and it hath not yet appeared what we shall be. We know that when He shall appear, we shall be like to Him, because we shall see Him as He is" (1 John 3:2). By this vision all our desires shall be fulfilled: "I shall be satiated, when Thy glory shall appear" (Ps. 16:15). From this state all evil and all sorrow shall be removed: "They shall no more hunger or thirst, neither shall the sun fall on them or any heat" (Apoc. 7:16).

To this essential happiness belong also the love of God and the enjoyment of God, seen face to face. "Charity never falleth away . . . And now there remain faith, hope, charity, these three, but the greater of these is charity" (1 Cor. 13). "Your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man shall take from you" (John 16:22).

II. Accidental happiness is a perfection of the just, different from the formal object of the beatific vision. It appears certain that there is such accidental happiness in heaven, because Scripture says: "There shall be joy before the angels of God upon one sinner doing penance" (Luke 15:10). This joy is different from the joy or enjoyment, which is a part of essential happiness. It would be hard and unnecessary to explain all that may be comprised in this accidental happiness. We shall just mention a few points. As far as the soul is concerned, there remain in the blessed, with the exception of faith and hope, which are incompatible with the beatific vision and the absolute certainty of everlasting happiness, all other supernatural habits, such as the gifts of the Holy Ghost. Then in heaven there is a special reward for an extraordinary victory won. So does Scripture assign a special accidental glory to the virgins, the martyrs and the doctors.

Celestial happiness will have two chief properties, as shown to us by revelation, viz.: *inequality* and *perpetuity*. The first is a dogma of our holy faith, since the Council of Florence has defined that, on account of a difference

of merits, one will behold God more perfectly than the other. This is clear from numerous texts of Holy Scripture: "In the house of My Father," says Christ, "there are many mansions" (John 14:2). But this inequality will not cause any jealousy among the blessed; on the contrary, they will rejoice over one another's glory. Perpetuity of celestial happiness is equally a dogma of our holy faith: "The just shall live forever more, and their reward is with the Lord" (Wisd. 5:16).

421. *Q. What words should we bear always in mind?*

A. We should bear always in mind these words of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ: "What doth it profit a man if he gain the whole world and suffer the loss of his own soul, or what exchange shall a man give for his soul? For the Son of man shall come in the glory of His Father with His angels; and then will He render to every man according to his works." (Mat. 16:26.)

The words here quoted by the Catechism are a very appropriate conclusion to the most important of all studies, the study of the true religion; they impress upon us the necessity of living up to what we have been taught. The will of God is our sanctification. If we miss the end of our Creation, it would be preferable for us never to have existed. The need of saving our soul is so urgent, that we must be willing to sacrifice our temporal life for it, and never hesitate to give up all temporal pleasures and comforts for it. On the other hand, we incur an irreparable loss, if we lose immortal happiness. The greatest earthly gain that can be made is nothing compared with what we lose, when we lose our soul. How ridiculous should appear to us the frivolous trifles, which so often cause us to deviate from the path of righteousness! It would be impossible for one to gain the world; but supposing he could and actually gained it, what benefit would it be to him? The enjoyment of the world would be but for a time; the sacrifice of the soul for it, means eternal punishment. There is no possibility of an exchange to redeem the soul once it is lost. The final reward is the great encouragement, of which we never should lose sight, in the performance of our obligations to our Creator. He will come to judge and give to each one according to his works. The more faithfully we shall have served Him, the greater will be our reward. By

steadfastly connecting our duty to God with the hope of a glorious resurrection, we shall smooth the road that leads to heaven. Life is but a vapor, but upon it depends eternity.

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